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THE RAPE OF THE LOCK  
AND OTHER POEMS OF ALEXANDER POPE

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ALEXANDER POPE.

# THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AND OTHER POEMS OF  
ALEXANDER POPE

EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

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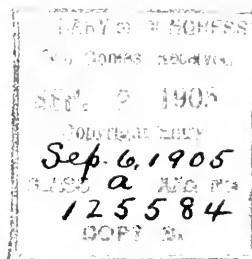
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# INTRODUCTION

## LIFE OF ALEXANDER POPE

By the beginning of the eighteenth century much had been accomplished by the poets of England: Chaucer had portrayed actual life, Spenser had revealed his rich imagination, Shakespeare had revelled in the ideal and the romantic, and Milton in the religious; but as yet no great poet had arisen to express the fashionable and conventional life which to England was a new phenomenon and the direct result of the infusion of French ideas and customs into the court of Charles II. It is because Pope became the exponent of this phase of English life that he became the literary autocrat of his own day, and even now occupies an important place in the history of English poetry.

Alexander Pope was one who had to battle against adverse circumstances. Born of humble parents, and therefore without social position; of Roman Catholic faith, and therefore politically ostracized; with a dwarfed, deformed, and sickly body, and therefore excluded from the usual vocations of an English gentleman; he yet triumphed over all. He became the acknowledged literary leader, and lived on terms of equality and friendship with the most eminent men and the proudest nobility of his day.

His paternal grandfather was a clergyman. His father,

who laid claims to nothing beyond respectability, was a successful linen merchant in London, with considerable literary taste as evidenced by the criticisms and advice given his son. Pope's mother, Edith Turner, came from an old Yorkshire family of exceptional culture.

The year 1688 was an important one in the family annals, for on May 21 the son Alexander was born, and about the same time the father retired from business and settled at Binfield, nine miles from Windsor. This retirement was no doubt due to the political revolution in England which was so fatal to the hopes of the Catholics. It is alleged that the poor gentleman was so distressed over the turn affairs had taken, and so conscientious in his loyalty, that he refused to invest his little fortune in any way that might benefit his enemies. He therefore put his money into strong boxes and lived upon the principal until very little or nothing was left. The son was brought up to honor his father's faith and in later years expresses great pride in that father's uprightness and strict adherence to principle.

Pope's father was twice married and had one daughter by his first wife, but Alexander was the only child of the second marriage. He was a sweet-tempered child, and the idol of the household. From the beauty of his voice he was called "the little nightingale"; and as he was a sickly, precocious infant, we may well imagine that he was not a little spoiled by his elderly parents, both of whom were forty-six years of age at his birth.

The family had moved to Binfield that they might have the association of a number of Catholic families who lived in that neighborhood, but even here to be a Catholic meant to be debarred from public schools and

university. In consequence of this, the child was placed successively under the charge of three or four Roman priests from whom he learned the rudiments of Greek and Latin. During this time we learn that he left one school because he had received a flogging for satirizing the master, and that when he was ten years of age, he built a tragedy based on a translation of the *Iliad*, and that at twelve he read Latin fluently. His scholarship was never accurate, and he later congratulated himself that he had learned to read the classics for the sense, not the words. In respect to scholarship, however, he was not behind his age; for Addison, who spent many years at the university, had no intimate acquaintance with either Greek or Latin authors. And yet academic training would, no doubt, have been an excellent thing for Pope, as he needed the discipline of such a tyranny in thought, though it is doubtful if such a mind as his would have submitted itself readily to rigid processes.

At the age of twelve, he outlined a course of study for himself, and plunged into it so enthusiastically that he brought on a severe illness. His scheme included the reading of philosophy, theology, history, poetry, and criticism. His greatest delight was evidently in the last two, and he made himself familiar with the greatest writers, both ancient and modern, using translations wherever they were easiest.

At an early age he began to feel that all other avenues were closed to him, so both by nature and determination, he turned to poetry for his life work. His precocity at rhyme was remarkable. He says:—

“As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.”

His father encouraged him in these early attempts, assigned him subjects, suggested revisions, and finally admitted, "These are good rhymes." It was no doubt due to his advice that Pope served a long apprenticeship in poetry, and when the verse of a foreign author pleased him, turned it into English, working it over and over until satisfied with the results. By the time he was fifteen he had imitated most of the ancient and modern poets. He did this, he says, "not in vanity, but in humility. I saw," he continues, "how defective my own things were and endeavored to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others."

Though but twelve years of age when Dryden died, he had already fixed his admiration upon him, and once persuaded his friends to take him to the coffee-house frequented by that poet that he might catch a glimpse of him. The influence of Dryden, his master, is very perceptible in all his work, but perhaps the greatest influence over his early life was that of Sir William Trumbull. This aged statesman, after an active and eventful life, had retired to the neighborhood of Binfield to live the quiet life of a country gentleman. Pleased with his young friend's precocity, he made much of the boy, rode with him, and discussed the poets, and finally suggested the translation of the *Iliad*. Many of the ideas expressed in the *Essay on Criticism* are attributed to this gentleman.

Another friend who gave advice that Pope evidently made good use of was William Walsh, a gentleman of fortune and a scholar who had considerable reputation as a critic and a poet. It was he who advised Pope to make "correctness" his study and aim. By such friends

as these *The Pastorals* were first read and approved, and through Walsh, Pope was first introduced to Wycherly, and the literary clubs of London, to Steele, Addison, and Swift. It was at the invitation of Steele that he wrote the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, and it was Steele who got the *Messiah* published in the *Spectator* and other poems and papers in the *Guardian*.

But London life with its late hours and constant dissipation was little suited to the dwarfed and sickly young man, and before long he returned to the country where his weak constitution unfitted him for the hard riding and heavy drinking of the country gentlemen around Binfield. At the age of seventeen he had given up all hope of life, and wrote farewell verses to his friends, one of whom, Abbé Southcote, interested a famous London specialist in his case. The latter advised him to diet, give up study, and take more exercise. He did so, and in a measure recovered. Yet he was never strong, frequently suffered from severe headaches, and declared that he was never free from pain. It was only by taking the most excellent care of himself that he was able to live at all. He went through life padded and braced with stays, petted and nursed and deferred to by women, and in a large measure dependent on them for society and companionship.

In 1711 was published the *Essay on Criticism* which had been written two years earlier, but which Pope, in accordance with his custom, had kept by him in order to revise and polish it. In 1712 *The Rape of the Lock* appeared, and in the year following Pope undertook the translation of the *Iliad*.

The publication of this last-named work marks an

epoch in the history of English literature. Pope foresaw the end of literary patronage and he therefore determined to issue the work by subscription. His friends, especially Swift, assisted him, and before it was published a full list of subscribers had been secured for a folio edition in six volumes at a guinea apiece. Later he sold the copyright on this work at a good price, and gained all together by this work £5320, the largest sum ever made up to that time on any one literary production. By his translation of the *Odyssey* Pope made about £3500 more and though the payments on these were spread over a period of eleven years, yet he saved enough to be comfortable for the rest of his days.

In 1716 Pope had induced his parents to remove to Mauston's New Buildings on the bank of the river at Chiswick. Two years later, after the death of his father, he gave up these unaristocratic holdings and secured the proprietorship of Twickenham on the Thames, a much more desirable home. This place was on the edge of London, and near to Hampton and Richmond, so that Pope, while not in the midst of the gay world, might be close enough to it to be in contact with his friends who were, and as near as his poor weak body permitted him to be. Here the poet lived for the next twenty-five years, and here he died. Perhaps no scenes of his life present greater felicity than those of his gardening on this estate. The little park and gardens embracing only five acres were divided by a public thoroughfare, and Pope connected the two parts by a grotto, an underground passageway which he took the greatest delight in arranging and decorating with rocks and shells and mirrors so arranged that they showed what was passing

on the road and on the river beyond. Here the poet entertained his friends, the highest nobles and the chief literary men of his time, and here he retired from the noise of the world. His gardens he also laid out with great taste, being naturally a landscape artist, and he skilfully made them to appear several times larger than they really were by leaving dense borders of seemingly impenetrable forests on all sides, and arranging walks and vistas ending with obelisks and shrubbery. These gardens and lawns have since been built over, and the hedges cut down, but the Prince of Wales's garden is still a large measure a copy of it made with Pope's consent. Here, too, the poet took great pleasure in river rides, and kept not only a luxurious boat, but a riverman who was a regular member of his household.

Up the river also to the boat landing at Twickenham, came Gay, who sometimes spent weeks under Pope's roof, Swift, who remained months at a time, Bolingbroke, Peterborough, Swift, and the Prince of Wales. Here in these gardens and lawns Pope found the recreation and variety which he could not gain by foreign travel and long visits, since for many years his mother's health did not permit him to leave her side; here he produced his most characteristic work; and here he spent his last days, surrounded by a few faithful friends.

As soon as the *Odyssey* was finished, he proceeded to punish those of his enemies and critics who had presumed to attack his previous writings. Some years before, Swift had advised him not to immortalize the names of his detractors by recognizing them and embodying them in his verses, and Pope had cheerfully assented. Now he submitted a scheme of the *Dunciad*

to Swift who just as warmly urged him to take up the work, and Pope just as warmly accepted the advice. The result was that in 1728 appeared the *Dunciad*, the most elaborate satire in our language. Though he claimed that his object was doing good by the exposing of the ignorant and pretentious authors, yet from what we know of his character, there is little doubt that he was animated in no small measure by personal ill-feeling. Theobald, who had far surpassed him as an editor of Shakespeare, was elevated to the throne of Dulness, though later he was deposed to make room for Cibber, with whom Pope had a more recent quarrel, and who was certainly little deserving of that "bad eminence."

The work as a whole is dull reading, though it occasionally rises to the height of true poetry, as notably in the last lines, which have been most lavishly praised by Thackeray and other careful critics. On the day it was first offered for sale a crowd of authors besieged the shop trying to hinder its publication, and another crowd of booksellers and hawkers demanding it. The satire had its immediate effect, and one poor poet declared he was in danger of starving, as the publishers were now no longer willing to accept his work. In order to protect himself from prosecution for libel, Pope had taken the precaution to have the first edition sold under the auspices of certain powerful noblemen; but even then, it is said that his victims determined to punish him, and that more than one only awaited a favorable opportunity to attack him. His friends prevailed on him to exercise great care when he went abroad, and he never appeared without his great mastiff Bouncer and a brace of pistols.



The *Dunciad* marks a turning point in his career as a poet, for thereafter his poetry has a philosophical cast. In 1773 appeared what has been called his noblest work, the *Essay on Man*. When his orthodoxy was attacked because of his theories in this *Essay*, Pope was deeply distressed and gladly accepted the championship of Warburton. And yet we may doubt if he knew or deeply understood the trend of just what he had said or suggested in this work. It seems to have been rather a poetic expression of a collection of views of life and religion as seen by his familiar friends. Much of it may be traced to Bolingbroke, who though a deist took good care not to let it appear so to Pope, and whose philosophy is evident under this thin mask of verse. However weak he may have been as a philosopher, Pope cannot but astonish us by his marvellous skill at expression in this poem. Few persons may know the whole, but these and other lines have passed into common speech, — the best possible evidence of power of expression: —

“Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind.”

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole.”

“Order is Heaven’s first law.”

“Nor and shame from no condition rise:  
Act well your part; there all the honor lies.”

“Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow;  
The rest is all but leather and prunella.”

“And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.”

Pope's latter years were employed with the *Imitations and Satires* and with controversies over his correspondence, which he manœuvred to have published supposedly through the indiscretion of Swift and without his consent. Later biographers who have striven to unravel the tangled skein leave us little choice but to believe that Pope did descend to very doubtful means in this matter, that he did alter dates, prune the substance, and otherwise materially change his letters before sending them to the publishers, and that he misrepresented his correspondents in certain cases. We are, moreover, not at all assured that these alterations and equivocations have in any way or measure added to his fame as a man of letters; for his correspondence lacks the clearness and directness of most of his verse, and is devoid of the naturalness which must ever be the charm of the letter-writer.

Pope's health had never been robust, and it was said that he was never free from physical suffering, but his latter years were more than ever painful. At the last his delirium caused him the greatest distress, and on recovering from it only shortly before his death, he was most solicitous to know whether he had during his illness unconsciously offended or embarrassed any of his friends, saying that "the loss of rationality was sufficient humiliation for the vanity of any man."

Sensitive as he was, and spiteful as he might become to his enemies, he had one of the tenderest hearts for his particular friends, and a most friendly feeling for mankind in general. While his contemporaries condemned him for his parsimony in refusing to drink and gamble with them, and his closely driven bargains with his clerks

and publishers, he was giving away in known charities one-eighth of his annual income of £800 in addition to what he gave to relieve occasional needs. His liberality with his servants and those in the homes of the friends whom he visited was notable. The old servant who was called up four times in a winter night to bring paper and pens lest Mr. Pope might lose a valuable thought or couplet averred that she gladly served him, and that she needed no wages in a family where Mr. Pope was a visitor. A friend tells of his coming in exhausted on a sultry summer day, after having walked three miles because he had loaned his carriage to a lady who had had some accident to her own.

That Pope became the earliest man of letters pure and simple was due both to choice and to necessity. To him poetry was its own reward, and with no advantage of birth or fortune he rose to a position of equality with the highest in the land, and all this without sacrificing his self-respect or independence. His was a triumph of sheer intellect over external disadvantages. That he lived in ease and comfort while Dryden died in poverty is due in no small measure to the fact that he took the world, even his contemporaries, into his confidence. Few men have lived whose lives have been so thoroughly known to the world and over whose conduct and character there has been more discussion.

After a careful and sympathetic reading of his biography, his correspondence, and his works, one can but find him full of contradictions, — a man to be admired and pitied. In dress he was elegant and fastidious; in manner courtly. With his servants he was punctilious and troublesome; with his friends often lacking in frank-

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ness, as was seen in his artifices with his correspondence, but as a Catholic in the reign of William and Mary he was brought up in an atmosphere of intrigue. Affecting to disregard fame, yet he courted it; while posing as superior to any regard for rank, he prided himself upon his acquaintance with men of high social station; apparently indifferent to poetry, he made it his real profession, and was never without a poetic scheme in his head; while pretending to be careless of his enemies and insensible to censure, he was most impatient of attack and writhed under criticism.

Yet he never sold himself to the highest bidder, he kept his independence, he never flattered for selfish ends. He refused to dedicate his *Iliad* to Lord Halifax, though it might have been greatly to his advantage to do so, and he rejected the pension which Craggs offered him out of the Secret Service Fund. His failure, so far as it was such, was rather because he neglected to look for the great eternal truths and saw too much of the petty and trivial, and allowed his life to be rendered less happy on that account. When the South Sea bubble broke and he lost the shares presented to him by Craggs and Sir Francis Childs, together with some purchased by himself, he congratulated himself that he had not sold his shares and enriched himself at the expense of others. Living in an age of coarseness, his morality is unimpeached. Governed ever by reason and common sense, he yet paid abuse in kind. He was a pious and devoted son, who cherished his mother and sacrificed much for her comfort and happiness. He retained his friends to the last. He wished ever to be thought good rather than great, a hater of vice because a lover of virtue.

## POPE'S FRIENDS

Pope was from the first singularly fortunate in making friends who could and would aid him in his chosen profession. The relations between him and Sir William Trumbull, Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Swift have already been referred to, but in other cases he was less happy in his friendships.

The aged Wycherly, to whom he was introduced by Walsh, asked him to correct his poems. Pope did so conscientiously, and advised that they be turned into prose. This so incensed the elder poet that he never forgave his youthful friend, though Pope retained a friendly feeling for him and visited him on his deathbed.

Addison, who might have been his best friend, was early estranged from him. First, Addison had the misfortune to advise him not to modify *The Rape of the Lock*, after its first publication, by adding the machinery of the sylphs. Pope pursued his intention contrary to this advice; and as it proved a very happy alteration, he saw, or what was equally disastrous to their friendship, thought he saw, that Addison had been jealous and selfish of that success. Though a truce was patched up, it was broken again when Pope asked Addison to read the first book of the translation of Homer's *Iliad*, and Addison replied that he was unable to do so, having already performed that office for his friend Tickell who was also engaged on a translation of the same work, but that he would gladly read the second book. Pope immediately took this as a personal affront, and his bitterness toward

Addison was unconcealed from that moment, though several times friends tried to reconcile the two.

Warburton, who came to his defence when his orthodoxy was attacked on account of the *Essay on Man*, remained his steadfast, though sometimes his indiscreet, friend. In his latter years Pope was left almost alone, through the death of his mother, of Gay, and of Arbuthnot, and through Swift's infirmities. Thus he was dependent on Warburton and Bolingbroke who had always been intimate, and yet who had never been truly the friends of his heart.

In his relations with women, also, Pope was unhappy. Apparently few came into his life, but among that few Lady Mary Montagu was the most brilliant as well as the one who treated him most cruelly. Pope was unaccustomed to society, and was dazzled by her beauty and accomplishments. He, in turn, attracted her by his wit and his fame, and they became friends. When she accompanied her husband, Mr. Montagu, who went as ambassador to Constantinople, she corresponded with Pope, and to her he sent a copy of *Eloisa to Abelard* with the insinuation that the last lines referred to his feelings toward her. On her return to England Lady Mary went to reside at Twickenham and became his neighbor. Here she rebuffed his attentions and cruelly laughed at him. Ever after they were implacable enemies and indulged in a most undignified controversy, in the carrying on of which Lady Mary was assisted by some of Pope's most bitter enemies.

His relations with Teresa and Martha Blount was little less fortunate. He had been an intimate friend of the sisters from his early days, and had kept up a corre-



spondence with them in which he made gay attempts to treat them equally. The letters show, nevertheless, that while his highest compliments appear to be bestowed upon the elder sister Teresa, his real affection was for Martha or Patty. There is no doubt that Pope would have liked to marry the latter, but for many years was restrained from pressing his suit by the fact of his deformity. When he did suggest the alliance to the elder sister, she rejected the proposition for Martha and in such scornful terms that Pope could not in honor continue his suit. Deeply hurt as he was, he settled a pension on Miss Teresa, the family then being in need of financial aid, and left the bulk of his property, not including his works, to Martha. As time went on the friendship between him and the latter was resumed, and in the last years of his life, he grew to depend much upon her for sympathy and companionship. Though his most affectionate verses were on his mother, yet some of his best and tenderest were inspired by blue-eyed Patty Blount. Though on the whole Pope appeared to have little respect for women, yet to him these two were ideals of womanliness, and he has paid them both many high tributes.

## THE WORKS OF POPE

The rhymed couplet was the most common poetic measure of the "classic age" of Dryden and Pope. It is evidence of the reaction from the license and extravagance of verse of the later Elizabethan days, and as characteristic of the correct manner of poetry of that day as the earlier meters were of the romantic period.

It marks a step in the evolution of literary style which ranges from the sincerity of Shakespeare, through the violent effort at verse and the strained plots and language of his successors, to the restraint of lawlessness in the Queen Anne period. Edmund Waller and George Sandys had begun, Dryden had carried on, and to Pope was left the task of completing the work of polishing and perfecting this form of verse. And it was a labor for which he was well fitted both by nature and inclination. A man who either possessed no violent emotions or had so restrained them that they were his humble servants was the very one to bring conventionality to its high-water mark. He was willing to sacrifice everything else to his bright glancing couplet with its brilliancy of sound and varied diction. His poetry is without doubt artificial and rhetorical, but it is as perfect a representation of the age as the glowing fancy and rich imagery of Spenser is of the earlier Elizabethan period. It is too regular and too conscious a form to be generally used. Neither prose nor poetry can long be confined in so narrow limits as the rules of "classic" poetry, and hence we find a reversion to romanticism beginning with Gray and Cowper and continuing to the twentieth century through a succession of Burns, Wordsworth, Longfellow, and Lanier.

The early poems of Pope are unreal and artificial, conventional and affected, but such was the fashion of the age. The poets of the day prided themselves on their simplicity, but their swains and shepherdesses are the merest affectations, their chronology the most faulty. Even Pope, who remembered that there were in his day no wolves and bears in the neighborhood of London, yet had a milk-white bull brought before the altar to be slain.

day of his death, friends and admirers paid him the highest homage, even flattery and adulation. The reaction which afterward set in against him was as unjustified and undue as the exaggeration of the first estimate of his work. No writer remains a classic to successive generations of readers without having substantial merits and claims to the position, and Pope has such. In diction, and in technical skill, and in the power to make his manner correspond to the matter, he is still unsurpassed and but rarely equalled; in the use of the antithesis unrivalled; in description and rhetorical device of unquestioned ability. To many he will ever be unsatisfying because of his lack of the romantic and spiritual elements, but for others he will ever be an unfailing well of enjoyment, and will always be sure of a high place, though it is hardly possible that he will ever regain the place he held in the eighteenth century.

His work is fragmentary and, except *The Rape of the Lock*, of disjointed members; but this is of less importance because we are most pleased with the details. His verses are like mosaics of exquisite workmanship. The exactness and propriety of phrase will ever charm though we may regret the lack of spirituality, of romance, and of mystery; and Pope, the poet of society, will ever hold the first place in the rank of the secondary poets of the world.



# THE RAPE OF THE LOCK°

## AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

(1712)

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos ;  
Sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.

*Mart. Epig. xii. 84.*

### CANTO I

*—*

WHAT° dire offence from am'rous causes springs,  
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,  
I sing — This verse to *Caryll*,° muse ! is due:  
This, ev'n Belinda° may vouchsafe to view:  
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,  
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

5

Say what strange motive, Goddess ! could compel  
A well-bred Lord° t' assault a gentle Belle ?  
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,  
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord ?  
In tasks so bold can little men engage,  
And in soft bosoms dwell's such mighty rage ?

10

Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,  
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.  
Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing shake,  
And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake:  
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,

15

And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.  
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,  
20 Her guardian Sylph prolong'd the balmy rest.  
'Twas he had summon'd to her silent bed  
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head;  
A youth more glitt'ring than a Birthnight Beau<sup>o</sup>  
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)  
25 Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,  
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say:  
'Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care  
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!  
If e'er one vision touch'd thy infant thought,  
30 Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught —  
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,  
The silver token,<sup>o</sup> and the circled green,<sup>o</sup>  
Or virgins visited by Angel-powers,  
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flowers;  
35 Hear and believe! thy own importance know,  
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.  
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,  
To maids alone and children are reveal'd:  
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?  
40 The fair and innocent shall still believe.  
Know, then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,  
The light militia of the lower sky:  
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,  
Hang o'er the Box,<sup>o</sup> and hover round the Ring.<sup>o</sup>  
45 Think what an equipage thou hast in air,  
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.  
As now your own, our beings were of old,  
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous mould;  
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair

From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50  
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,  
That all her vanities at once are dead;  
Succeeding vanities she still regards,  
And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.  
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55  
And love of Ombre, after death survive.  
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,  
To their first elements their souls retire.  
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame *termagants*  
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name. 60  
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,  
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental tea.  
The graver prude sinks downward to a Gnome  
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.  
The light coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair, 65  
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.  
'Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste  
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embraced;  
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease  
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please. 70  
What guards the purity of melting maids,  
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,  
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,  
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark;  
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires, 75  
When music softens, and when dancing fires?  
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,  
Tho' Honour is the word with men below.  
'Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,  
For life predestin'd to the Gnome's embrace. 80  
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,

When offers are disdain'd, and love denied :  
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,  
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,  
85 And garters, stars, and coronets appear,<sup>o</sup>  
And in soft sounds, "Your Grace" salutes their ear.  
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,  
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,  
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,  
90 And little hearts to flutter at a Beau.  
'Oft, when the world imagine women stray,  
The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their way ;  
Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,  
And old impertinence expel by new.  
95 What tender maid but must a victim fall  
To one man's treat, but for another's ball ?  
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,  
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand ?  
With varying vanities, from every part,  
100 They shift the moving toyshop of their heart ;  
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots  
strive,  
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.  
This erring mortals levity may call ;  
Oh blind to truth ! the Sylphs contrive it all.  
105 'Of these am I, who thy protection claim,  
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.  
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,  
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star  
I saw, alas ! some dread event impend,  
110 Ere to the main this morning sun descend, \  
But Heav'n reveals not what, or how or where.  
Warn'd by the Sylph, O pious maid, beware !



This to disclose is all thy guardian can:  
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!’

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long, 115  
Leap’d up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.

’Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,  
Thy eyes first open’d on a billet-doux;  
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,  
But all the vision vanish’d from thy head. 120

And now, unveil’d, the toilet stands display’d.  
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.

First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,  
With head uncover’d, the cosmetic powers.  
A heav’nly image in the glass appears; 125  
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.

Th’ inferior priestess, at her altar’s side,  
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.  
Unnumber’d treasures ope at once, and here  
The various off’rings of the world appear; 130

From each she nicely culls with curious toil,  
And decks the Goddess with the glitt’ring spoil.  
This casket India’s glowing gems unlocks,  
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.

The tortoise here and elephant<sup>o</sup> unite, 135  
Transform’d to combs, the speckled, and the white.  
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,  
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.—

Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;  
The Fair each moment rises in her charms, 140  
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,  
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;

Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,  
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.

145 The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,  
These set the head, and those divide the hair,  
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;  
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

## CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,  
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,  
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams  
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.  
5 Fair nymphs, and well-dress'd youths around her shone,  
But every eye was fixed on her alone.  
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,  
Which Jews might kiss,<sup>o</sup> and infidels adore.  
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,  
10 Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:  
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;  
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.  
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,  
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.  
15 Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide;  
If to her share some female errors fall,  
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.  
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,  
20 Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung behind  
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck  
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.  
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,  
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.

With hairy springes we the birds betray, 25  
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,  
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,  
And beauty draws us with a single hair.°

Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks admired;  
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspired. 30  
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,  
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;  
For when success a lover's toil attends,  
Few ask if fraud or force attain'd his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd 35  
Propitious Heav'n, and every Power ador'd,  
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built  
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.°  
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,  
And all the trophies of his former loves; 40  
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,  
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.  
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes  
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:  
The Powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,° 45  
The rest the winds dispers'd in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,  
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides  
While melting music steals upon the sky,  
And soften'd sounds along the waters die: 50  
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,  
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.  
All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts oppress  
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.  
He summons straight his denizens of air; 55  
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:

Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe  
That seem'd but zephyrs to the train beneath.  
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,  
60 Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;  
Transparent forms too fine for mortal sight,  
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light,  
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,  
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,  
65 Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,  
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,  
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,  
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.  
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,  
70 Superior by the head was Ariel placed;  
His purple pinions opening to the sun,  
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:  
    'Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear.  
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons,<sup>o</sup> hear!  
75 Ye know the spheres and various tasks assign'd  
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind,  
Some in the fields of purest ether play,  
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day:  
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,  
80 Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky:  
Some, less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light  
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,  
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,  
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,  
85 Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,  
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.  
Others, on earth, o'er human race preside,  
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:

- Of these the chief the care of nations own,  
 And guard with arms divine the British Throne. 90
- ‘Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,  
 Not a less pleasing, tho’ less glorious care;  
 To save the Powder from too rude a gale;  
 Nor let th’ imprison’d Essences exhale;  
 To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers; 95  
 To steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers  
 A brighter Wash; to curl their waving hairs,  
 Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;  
 Nay, oft in dreams invention we bestow,  
 To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow. 100
- ‘This day black omens threat the brightest Fair,  
 That e’er deserv’d a watchful spirit’s care;  
 Some dire disaster, or by force or slight;  
 But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in night.  
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana’s law, 105  
 Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;  
 Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,<sup>o</sup>  
 Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,  
 Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;  
 Or whether Heav’n has doom’d that Shock must fall. 110  
 Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge repair:  
 The flutt’ring fan be Zephyretta’s care;  
 The drops<sup>o</sup> to thee, Brillante, we consign;  
 And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;  
 Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav’rite Lock; 115  
 Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.<sup>o</sup>
- ‘To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,  
 We trust th’ important charge, the petticoat;  
 Oft have we known that sev’n-fold fence to fail,  
 Tho’ stiff with hoops, and arm’d with ribs of whale: 120

Form a strong line about the silver bound,  
And guard the wide circumference around.

‘Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,  
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,  
125 Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o’ertake his sins:  
Be stopp’d in vials, or transfix’d with pins,  
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,  
Or wedg’d whole ages in a bodkin’s eye;  
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,  
130 While clogg’d he beats his silken wings in vain,  
Or alum styptics with contracting power  
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell’d flower:  
Or, as Ixion<sup>o</sup> fix’d, the wretch shall feel  
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,  
135 In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,  
And tremble at the sea that froths below!’

He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;  
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;  
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;  
140 Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;  
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,  
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

### CANTO III

CLOSE by those meads, for ever crown’d with flowers,  
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers  
There stands a structure of majestic frame,<sup>o</sup>  
Which from the neighb’ring Hampton takes its name.  
5 Here Britain’s statesmen oft the fall foredoom  
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;

Here, thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,  
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;  
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,  
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;  
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,  
And one describes a charming Indian screen;  
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;  
At every word a reputation dies.

*Cards*  
10

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,  
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that*.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,  
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;  
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,  
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine<sup>o</sup>;  
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,  
And the long labours of the toilet cease.

20

Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,  
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,  
At Ombre<sup>o</sup> singly to decide their doom,  
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.  
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,  
Each band the number of the sacred Nine.

25

Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard  
Descend, and sit on each important card:

30

First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,<sup>o</sup>  
Then each according to the rank they bore;  
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,  
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

35

Behold four Kings in majesty revered,  
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;

- And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a flower  
40 Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;  
Four Knaves, in garbs succinct, a trusty band,  
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand  
And party-colour'd troops, a shining train,  
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
- 45 The skilful nymph reviews her force with care;  
'Let Spades be trumps!' she said, and trumps they were  
Now move to war her sable Matadores,  
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.  
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord°!
- 50 Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.  
As many more Manillio° forced to yield,  
And march'd a victor from the verdant field.  
Him Basto° follow'd, but his fate more hard  
Gain'd but one trump and one plebeian card.
- 55 With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,  
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,  
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd;  
The rest his many colour'd robe conceal'd.  
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
- 60 Proves the just victim of his royal rage.  
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,  
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,°  
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,  
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade.
- 65 Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;  
Now to the Baron Fate inclines the field.  
His warlike amazon her host invades,  
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.  
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
- 70 Spite of his haughty mien and barb'rous pride:



What boots the regal circle on his head,  
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;  
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,  
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?

The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace; 75  
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,  
And his refulgent Queen, with powers combin'd,  
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.  
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,  
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green, 80  
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,  
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,  
With like confusion diff'rent nations fly,  
Of various habit, and of various dye;  
The pierced battalions disunited fall 85  
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.

The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,  
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.  
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,  
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look; 90  
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,  
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.<sup>o</sup>  
And now (as oft in some distemper'd state)  
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate!  
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen 95  
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen.  
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,  
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.  
The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the sky;  
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply. 100

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:

Sudden these honours shall be snatch'd away,  
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.

- 105 For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,  
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round°;  
On shining altars of japan they° raise  
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:  
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,  
110 While China's earth receives the smoking tide.  
At once they gratify their scent and taste,  
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.  
Straight hover round the Fair her airy band;  
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,  
115 Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,  
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.  
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,  
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)  
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain  
120 New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.  
Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,  
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!  
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,  
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair°!
- 125 But when to mischief mortals bend their will,  
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!  
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace  
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:  
So ladies in romance assist their knight,  
130 Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.  
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends  
The little engine on his fingers' ends;  
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,  
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.

Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites repair; 135  
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;  
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;  
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.  
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought  
The close recesses of the virgin's thought: 140  
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,  
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,  
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,  
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.  
Amaz'd, confused, he found his power expired, 145  
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retired.  
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide,  
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.  
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,  
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed; 150  
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain  
(But airy substance soon unites again).<sup>o</sup>  
The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever  
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!  
Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes, 155  
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.  
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,  
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;  
Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from high,  
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie<sup>o</sup>! 160  
'Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,'  
The Victor cried, 'the glorious prize is mine!  
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,  
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,  
As long as Atalantis<sup>o</sup> shall be read, 165  
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,<sup>o</sup>

While visits shall be paid on solemn days,  
 When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze:  
 While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,  
 170 So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!  
 What Time would spare, from Steel<sup>o</sup> receives its date,  
 And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!  
 Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,  
 And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;  
 175 Steel could the works of mortal pride confound  
 And hew triumphal arches to the ground.  
 What wonder, then, fair Nymph! thy hairs should feel  
 The conquering force of unresisted steel?'

## CANTO IV

BUT anxious cares<sup>o</sup> the pensive nymph opprest,  
 And secret passions labour'd in her breast.  
 Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
 Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
 5 Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,  
 Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,  
 Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
 Not Cynthia when her mantua's pinn'd awry,  
 E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
 10 As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.  
 For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,  
 And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,  
 Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite  
 As ever sullied the fair face of light,  
 15 Down to the central earth, his proper scene,  
 Repair'd to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,  
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.  
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,  
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows. 20  
Here in a grotto shelter'd close from air,  
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,  
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,  
Pain at her side, and Megrin<sup>o</sup> at her head.  
Two handmaids wait the throne; alike in place, 25  
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.  
Here stood Ill-nature, like an ancient maid,  
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd!  
With store of prayers for mornings, nights, and noons,  
Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons. 30  
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,  
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,  
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,  
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;  
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe, 35  
Wrapt in a gown for sickness and for show.  
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,  
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies  
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise; 40  
Dreadful as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,  
Or bright as visions of expiring maids:  
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,  
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires;  
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes, 45  
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

Unnumber'd throngs on ev'ry side are seen,  
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.

Here living Teapots stand, one arm held out,  
50 One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:  
A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod<sup>o</sup> walks;  
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks<sup>o</sup>;  
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,  
And maids turn'd bottles call aloud for corks.  
55 Safe pass'd the Gnome thro' this fantastic band,  
A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.  
Then thus address'd the Power — 'Hail, wayward Queen!  
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:  
Parent of Vapours and of female wit,  
Who give th' hysteric or poetic fit,  
60 On various tempers act by various ways,  
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;  
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,  
And send the godly in a pet to pray.  
A nymph there is that all your power disdains,  
65 And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.  
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,  
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,  
Like citron-waters<sup>o</sup> matrons' cheeks inflame,  
Or change complexions at a losing game;  
70 If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,  
Or rumbled petticoats, or tumbled beds,  
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,  
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,  
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease,  
75 Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease,  
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;  
That single act gives half the world the spleen.'  
The Goddess, with a discontented air,  
Seems to reject him tho' she grants his prayer.

A wondrous Bag with both her hands she binds, 80  
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds<sup>o</sup>;  
There she collects the force of female lungs,  
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.  
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,  
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears. 85  
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,  
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.  
Sunk in Thalestris'<sup>o</sup> arms the nymph he found,  
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.  
Full o'er their heads the swelling Bag he rent, 90  
And all the Furies issued at the vent.  
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,  
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.  
'O wretched maid!' she spread her hands, and cried  
(While Hampton's echoes, 'Wretched maid!' replied), 95  
'Was it for this you took such constant care  
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?  
For this your locks in paper durance bound?  
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?  
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head, 100  
And bravely bore the double loads of lead<sup>o</sup>?  
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,  
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!  
Honour forbid! at whose unrivall'd shrine  
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, all, our sex resign. 105  
Methinks already I your tears survey,  
Already hear the horrid things they say,  
Already see you a degraded toast,  
And all your honour in a whisper lost!  
How shall I, then, your hapless fame defend? 110  
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!

- And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,  
Expos'd thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,  
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,  
115 On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?  
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,  
And Wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow°;  
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,  
Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!'   
120 She said; then raging to Sir Plume° repairs,  
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs  
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,  
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane):  
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,  
125 He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,  
And thus broke out — 'My lord, why, what the devil!  
Z—ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!  
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!  
Give her the hair.' — He spoke, and rapp'd his box.  
130 'It grieves me much,' replied the Peer again,  
'Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain:  
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock, I swear  
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;  
Which never more its honours shall renew,  
135 Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew),  
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,  
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.'  
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread  
The long-contended honours of her head.  
140 But Umbriel, hateful Gnome, forbears not so;  
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.  
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,  
Her eyes half-languishing, half drown'd in tears;



On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head, 145  
Which with a sigh she rais'd, and thus she said:  
    'For ever curs'd be this detested day,  
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!  
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,  
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen! 150  
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,  
By love of courts to numerous ills betray'd.  
O had I rather unadmired remain'd  
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;  
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way, 155  
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!  
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,  
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.  
What mov'd my mind with youthful lords to roam?  
O had I stay'd, and said my prayers at home; 160  
'Twas this the morning omens seem'd to tell,  
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box<sup>o</sup> fell;  
The tott'ring china shook without a wind;  
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!  
A Sylph, too, warn'd me of the threats of fate, 165  
In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!  
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!  
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares.  
These, in two sable ringlets taught to break,  
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck; 170  
The sister-lock now sits uncouth alone,  
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;  
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal shears demands,  
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.  
O hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize 175  
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!'

## CANTO V

- SHE said: the pitying audience melt in tears;  
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.  
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,  
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?  
5 Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,  
While Anna begg'd and Dido raged in vain.<sup>o</sup>  
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;  
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:  
    'Say, why are beauties prais'd and honour'd most,  
10 The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?  
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,  
Why angels call'd, and angel-like ador'd?  
Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd beaux?  
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows<sup>o</sup>?  
15 How vain are all these glories, all our pains,  
Unless Good Sense preserve what Beauty gains;  
That men may say when we the front-box grace,  
"Behold the first in virtue as in face!"  
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,  
20 Charm'd the smallpox, or chased old age away;  
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,  
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?  
To patch, nay, ogle, might become a saint,  
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.  
25 But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,  
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since locks will turn to gray;  
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,  
And she who scorns a man must die a maid;  
What then remains, but well our power to use,

And keep good humour still whate'er we lose? 30  
And trust me, dear, good humour can prevail,  
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.  
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;  
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.'  
' So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued; 35  
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her prude.  
'To arms, to arms!' the fierce virago cries,  
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.  
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;  
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack; 40  
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,  
And base and treble voices strike the skies.  
No common weapons in their hands are found,  
Like Gods they fight nor dread a mortal wound.  
So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage, 45  
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;  
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;  
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms;  
Jove's thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around,  
Blue Neptune storms, the bell'wing deeps resound: 50  
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,  
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!  
Triumphant Umbriel, on a sconce's height,  
Clapp'd his glad wings, and sat to view the fight:  
Propp'd on their bodkin-spears, the sprites survey 55  
The growing combat, or assist the fray.  
While thro' the press enraged Thalestris flies,  
And scatters death around from both her eyes,  
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng,  
One died in metaphor, and one in song: 60  
'O cruel Nymph! a living death I bear,'

Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.

A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,  
'Those eyes are made so killing' — was his last.

65 Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies  
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,  
Chloe stepped in, and kill'd him with a frown;  
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,

70 But, at her smile, the beau revived again.  
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,<sup>o</sup>  
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;  
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;  
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

75 See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,  
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;  
Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,  
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.  
But this bold lord, with manly strength endued,  
80 She with one finger and a thumb subdued:  
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,  
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;  
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,  
The pungent grains of titillating dust.

85 Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,  
And the high dome reëchoes to his nose.

'Now meet thy fate,' incens'd Belinda cried,  
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.

(The same, his ancient personage to deck,

90 Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,  
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,  
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:  
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,

- The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;  
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,  
Which long she wore and now Belinda wears.) 95  
    'Boast not my fall,' he cried, 'insulting foe!  
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;  
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind°:  
All that I dread is leaving you behind! 100  
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,  
And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn alive.'  
'Restore the Lock!' she cries; and all around  
'Restore the Lock!' the vaulted roofs rebound.  
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain 105  
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.  
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,  
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!  
(The lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,  
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain: 110  
With such a prize no mortal must be blest.  
So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?  
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,  
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.  
There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases, 115  
And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.  
There broken vows, and deathbed alms are found,  
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,  
The courtier's promises, and sick man's prayers,  
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs, 120  
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,  
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.  
But trust the Muse — she saw it upward rise,  
Tho' mark'd by none but quick poetic eyes  
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew, 125

To Proculus alone confess'd in view):

A sudden star, it shot thro' liquid air,

And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.

Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,

130 The heav'ns bespangling with dishevell'd light.

The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,

And pleas'd pursue its progress thro' the skies.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,

And hail with music its propitious ray;

135 This the blest lover shall for Venus take,

And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;

This Partridge<sup>o</sup> soon shall view in cloudless skies,

When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes<sup>o</sup>;

And hence th' egregious wizzard shall foredoom

140 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.

Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,

Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!

Not all the tresses that fair head can boast

Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.

145 For after all the murders of your eye,

(When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;

When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,

And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,

This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,

150 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

# AN ESSAY ON MAN

## IN FOUR EPISTLES TO LORD BOLINGBROKE

The first two epistles of the *Essay on Man* were written in 1732, the third in the year following, and the fourth in 1734, when the complete *Essay* was published as we have it.

### EPISTLE I

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO  
THE UNIVERSE

AWAKE, my ST. JOHN<sup>o</sup>! leave all meaner things  
To low ambition and the pride of Kings.  
Let us, since life can little more supply  
Than just to look about us and to die,  
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man; 5  
A mighty maze<sup>o</sup>! but not without a plan;  
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,  
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.  
Together let us beat this ample field,  
Try what the open, what the covert yield; 10  
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore  
Of all who blindly creep or sightless soar;

Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
 And catch the manners living as they rise;  
 15 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,  
 But vindicate the ways of God to man.°

I. Say first, of God above or Man below  
 What can we reason but from what we know?  
 Of man what see we but his station here,  
 20 From which to reason, or to which refer?  
 Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,  
 'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.  
 He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,  
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,  
 25 Observe how system into system runs,  
 What other planets circle other suns,  
 What varied being peoples every star,  
 May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are:  
 But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,  
 30 The strong connexions, nice dependencies,  
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul  
 Look'd thro'; or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain° that draws all to agree,  
 And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?  
 35 II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,  
 Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?  
 First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess  
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less!  
 Ask of thy mother earth why oaks are made  
 40 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade!  
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above  
 Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!  
 Of systems possible, if 'tis confess  
 That wisdom infinite must form the best,



Where all must fall or not coherent be, 45  
And all that rises rise in due degree;  
Then in the scale of reas'ning life 'tis plain  
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man:  
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)  
Is only this, — if God has placed him wrong? 50

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,  
May, must be right, as relative to all.  
In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,  
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;  
In God's, one single can its end produce, 55  
Yet serve to second too some other use:  
So man, who here seems principal alone,  
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,  
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal:  
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains  
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;  
When the dull ox,<sup>o</sup> why now he breaks the clod,  
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God;  
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend 65  
His actions', passions', being's, use and end;  
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why  
This hour a Slave, the next a Deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;  
Say rather man's as perfect as he ought; 70  
His knowledge measured to his state and place,  
His time a moment, and a point his space.  
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,  
What matter soon or late, or here or there?  
The blest to-day is as completely so 75  
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate,  
All but the page prescribed, their present state;  
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know;  
80 Or who could suffer being here below?  
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,  
Had he thy reason would he skip and play?  
Pleas'd to the last he crops the flowery food,  
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.  
85 O blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,  
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n;  
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,<sup>o</sup>  
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,  
90 And now a bubble burst, and now a world.  
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;  
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.  
What future bliss He gives not thee to know,  
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.  
95 Hope springs eternal in the human breast: —  
Man never is, but always to be, blest.  
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.  
Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind  
100 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul proud Science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk or milky way<sup>o</sup>;  
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler Heav'n,  
105 Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,  
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

To be, contents his natural desire;  
He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;  
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company. 110

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense  
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;  
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;  
Say, here he gives too little, there too much; 115  
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,  
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;  
If man alone engross not Heav'n's high care,  
Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120  
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,  
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God.  
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;  
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies!  
Pride still is aiming at the bless'd abodes, 125  
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.  
Aspiring to be Gods if Angels fell,  
Aspiring to be Angels men rebel:  
And who but wishes to invert the laws  
Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,  
Earth for whose use, — Pride answers, 'Tis for mine:  
For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,  
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flower;  
Annual for me the grape, the rose, renew 135  
The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;  
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;  
For me health gushes from a thousand springs  
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;  
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.' 140

- But errs not Nature from this gracious end,  
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,  
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep  
Towns to one grave,<sup>o</sup> whole nations to the deep?
- 145 'No,' 'tis replied, 'the first Almighty Cause'  
Acts not by partial but by gen'ral laws;  
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began  
And what created perfect?' — Why then man?  
If the great end be human happiness,
- 150 Then Nature deviates; and can man do less?  
As much that end a constant course requires  
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires;  
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,  
As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
- 155 If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,  
Why then a Borgia<sup>o</sup> or a Catiline?  
Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,  
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;  
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
- 160 Or turns young Ammon<sup>o</sup> loose to scourge mankind?  
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;  
Account for moral as for natural things:  
Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?  
In both, to reason right is to submit.
- 165 Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,  
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;  
That never air or ocean felt the wind,  
That never passion discomposed the mind:  
But all subsists by elemental strife;
- 170 And passions are the elements of life.  
The gen'ral order, since the whole began,  
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,  
And little less than Angel, would be more;  
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears 175  
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.  
Made for his use all creatures if he call,  
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?  
Nature to these without profusion kind,  
The proper organs, proper powers assign'd; 180  
Each seeming want compensated of course,  
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;  
All in exact proportion to the state;  
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate;  
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own: 185  
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?  
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,  
Be pleas'd with nothing if not bless'd with all?  
The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190  
No powers of body or of soul to share,  
But what his nature and his state can bear.  
Why has not man a microscopic eye?  
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.  
Say, what the use, were finer optics giv'n, 195  
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the Heav'n?  
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,  
To smart and agonize at every pore?  
Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,  
Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200  
If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,  
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,  
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still  
The whisp'ring zephyr and the purling rill?

205 Who finds not Providence all good and wise,  
Alike in what it gives and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,  
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.  
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race  
210 From the green myriads in the peopled grass:  
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,  
The mole's dim curtain and the lynx's beam:  
Of smell, the headlong lioness<sup>o</sup> between  
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:  
215 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood  
To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood.  
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,  
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:  
In the nice bee what sense so subtly true,  
220 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew!  
How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,  
Compared, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!  
'Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier!  
For ever separate, yet for ever near!  
225 Remembrance and reflection how allied!  
What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide!  
And middle natures how they long to join,  
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!  
Without this just gradation could they be  
230 Subjected these to those, or all to thee!  
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,  
Is not thy Reason all these powers in one?

VIII. See thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth  
All matter quick, and bursting into birth:  
235 Above, how high progressive life may go!  
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!

Vast chain of being! which from God began;  
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,  
Beast, bird, fish, insect, who no eye can see,  
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee; 240  
From thee to nothing. — On superior powers  
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;  
Or in the full creation leave a void,  
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:  
From Nature's chain whatever link you like, 245  
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And if each system in gradation roll,  
Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,  
The least confusion but in one, not all  
That system only, but the Whole must fall. 250  
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,  
Planets and stars run lawless thro' the sky;  
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,  
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;  
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255  
And Nature tremble to the throne of God!  
All this dread order break — for whom? for thee?  
Vile worm! — O madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,  
Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head? 260  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another in this gen'ral frame;  
Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains 265  
The great directing Mind of All ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;

That changed thro' all, and yet in all the same,  
270 Great in the earth as in th' ethereal frame,  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;  
275 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;  
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
As the rapt Seraph<sup>o</sup> that adores and burns.  
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;  
280 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all!

X. Cease, then, nor Order imperfection name;  
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.  
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree  
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.  
285 Submit: in this or any other sphere,  
Secure to be as bless'd as thou canst bear;  
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,  
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.  
All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;  
290 All chance direction, which thou canst not see;  
All discord, harmony not understood;  
All partial evil, universal good:  
And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.*



## EPISTLE II

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO  
HIMSELF AS AN INDIVIDUAL

I. KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is Man. —  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise and rudely great:  
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side, 5  
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,  
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a God or Beast;  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little or too much;  
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;  
Still by himself abused or disabused;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!  
Go, wondrous creature! mount where Science guides;  
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20  
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,  
Correct old Time,<sup>o</sup> and regulate the sun;  
Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,  
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;  
Or tread the mazy round his followers trod, 25  
And quitting sense call imitating God;

As eastern priests in giddy circles run,  
And turn their heads to imitate the sun.  
Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule —

30 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!

Superior beings, when of late they saw  
A mortal man unfold all Nature's law,  
Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,  
And show'd a NEWTON as we show an ape.

35 Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,  
Describe or fix one movement of his mind?  
Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,  
Explain his own beginning or his end?

Alas! what wonder! Man's superior part

40 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art;  
But when his own great work is but begun,  
What Reason weaves, by Passion is undone.

Trace Science then, with modesty thy guide;  
First strip off all her equipage of pride;

45 Deduct what is but vanity or dress,  
Or learning's luxury, or idleness,  
Or tricks to show the stretch of human brain,  
Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;  
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts;

50 Of all our vices have created arts;  
Then see how little the remaining sum,  
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!

II. Two principles in Human Nature reign,  
Self-love to urge, and Reason to restrain;

55 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call;  
Each works its end, to move or govern all:  
And to their proper operation still  
Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul; *1 ut*  
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60  
 Man but for that no action could attend,  
 And but for this were active to no end:  
 Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,  
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;  
 Or meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void, 65  
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.

Most strength the moving principle requires;  
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires:  
 Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,  
 Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70  
 Self-love still stronger, as its object's nigh;  
 Reason's at distance and in prospect lie:  
 That sees immediate good by present sense;  
 Reason, the future and the consequence.  
 Thicker than arguments, temptations throng; 75  
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.  
 The action of the stronger to suspend,  
 Reason still use, to Reason still attend.  
 Attention habit and experience gains; *1 ut*  
 Each strengthens Reason, and Self-love restrains. 80  
 Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,  
 More studious to divide than to unite;  
 And Grace and Virtue, Sense and Reason split,  
 With all the rash dexterity of Wit.  
 Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85  
 Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.  
 Self-love and Reason to one end aspire,  
 Pain their aversion, Pleasure their desire;  
 But greedy that, its object would devour;  
 This taste the honey, and not wound the flower: 90

Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,  
Our greatest evil or our greatest good.

III. Modes of Self-love the passions we may call;  
'Tis real good or seeming moves them all:

95 But since not every good we can divide,  
And Reason bids us for our own provide,  
Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,  
List under Reason, and deserve her care;  
Those that imparted court a nobler aim,  
100 Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name.

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast  
Their virtue fix'd; 'tis fix'd as in a frost;  
Contracted all, retiring to the breast;  
But strength of mind is Exercise, not Rest:  
105 The rising tempest puts in act the soul,  
Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.  
On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,  
Reason the card,<sup>o</sup> but Passion is the gale;  
Nor God alone in the still calm we find,  
110 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.

Passions, like elements, tho' born to fight,  
Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite:  
These 'tis enough to temper and employ;  
But what composes man can man destroy?  
115 Suffice that Reason keep to Nature's road;  
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.  
Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleasure's smiling train,  
Hate, Fear, and Grief, the family of Pain,  
These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,  
120 Make and maintain the balance of the mind;  
The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife  
Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes,  
And when in act they cease, in prospect rise:  
Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125  
The whole employ of body and of mind.  
All spread their charms, but charm not all alike;  
On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike;  
Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,  
As strong or weak the organs of the frame; 130  
And hence one Master-passion in the breast,  
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,  
Receives the lurking principle of death,  
The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135  
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his  
strength:

So, cast and mingled with his very frame,  
The mind's disease, its Ruling Passion, came;  
Each vital humour, which should feed the whole,  
Soon flows to this in body and in soul; 140  
Whatever warms the heart or fills the head,  
As the mind opens and its functions spread,  
Imagination plies her dangerous art,  
And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurse; 145  
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;  
Reason itself but gives it edge and power,  
As Heav'n's bless'd beam turns vinegar more sour.

We, wretched subjects, tho' to lawful sway,  
In this weak queen some fav'rite still obey: 150  
Ah! if she lend not arms as well as rules,  
What can she more than tell us we are fools?  
Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,

A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !  
155 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade  
The choice we make, or justify it made;  
Proud of an easy conquest all along,  
She but removes weak passions for the strong:  
So when small humours gather to a gout,  
160 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out.

Yes, Nature's road must ever be preferr'd;  
Reason is here no guide, but still a guard;  
'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,  
And treat this passion more as friend than foe:  
165 A mightier Power the strong direction sends,  
And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends:  
Like varying winds, by other passions toss'd,  
This drives them constant to a certain coast.  
Let Power or Knowledge, Gold or Glory, please,  
170 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease;  
Thro' life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expense;  
The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,  
The monk's humility, the hero's pride,  
All, all alike, find Reason on their side.  
175 Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill,  
Grafts on this passion our best principle:  
'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd,  
Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;  
The dross cements what else were too refin'd,  
180 And in one int'rest body acts with mind.

As fruits ungrateful to the planter's care,  
On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear,  
The surest Virtues thus from Passions shoot,  
Wild Nature's vigour working at the root.  
185 What crops of wit and honesty appear

From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!  
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;  
 Ev'n av'rice prudence, sloth philosophy;  
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,  
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind; 190  
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,  
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;  
 Nor virtue male or female can we name,  
 But what will grow on pride or grow on shame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195  
 The Virtue nearest to our Vice allied:  
 Reason the bias turns to good from ill,  
 And Nero reigns a Titus if he will.  
 The fiery soul abhorr'd in Catiline,  
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine°: 200  
 The same ambition can destroy or save,  
 And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

IV. This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,  
 What shall divide? — the God within the mind.°

Extremes in Nature equal ends produce; 205  
 In Man they join to some mysterious use;  
 Tho' each by turns the other's bounds invade,  
 As in some well-wrought picture light and shade;  
 And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice  
 Where ends the Virtue or begins the Vice. 210

Fools! who from hence into the notion fall  
 That Vice or Virtue there is none at all.  
 If white and black blend, soften, and unite  
 A thousand ways, is there no black or white?  
 Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain; 215  
 'Tis to mistake them costs the time and pain.

V. Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
220 We first endure, then pity, then embrace.  
But where th' extreme of Vice was ne'er agreed:  
Ask where's the north? — at York 'tis on the Tweed;  
In Scotland at the Orcades; and there  
At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.  
225 No creature own it in the first degree,  
But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he;  
Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,  
Or never feel the rage or never own;  
What happier natures shrink at with affright,  
230 The hard inhabitant contends is right.

Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,  
Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree:  
The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise,  
And ev'n the best by fits what they despise.  
235 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill;  
For Vice or Virtue, Self directs it still;  
Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal;  
But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the Whole.  
That counterworks each folly and caprice;  
240 That disappoints th' effect of every vice;  
That, happy frailties to all ranks applied,  
Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,  
Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,  
To kings presumption, and to crowds belief:  
245 That, virtue's ends from vanity can raise,  
Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise;  
And build on wants, and on defects of mind,  
The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.  
Heav'n forming each on other to depend,



A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250  
Bids each on other for assistance call,  
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.  
Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally  
The common int'rest, or endear the tie.  
To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255  
Each home-felt joy that life inherits here;  
Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,  
Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign;  
Taught, half by Reason, half by mere decay,  
To welcome Death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the passion — knowledge, fame or pelf —  
Not one will change his neighbour with himself.  
The learn'd is happy Nature to explore,  
The fool is happy that he knows no more;  
The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n, 265  
The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.  
See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,  
The sot a hero, lunatic a king,  
The starving chymist<sup>o</sup> in his golden views  
Supremely bless'd, the poet in his Muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,  
And Pride bestow'd on all, a common friend:  
See some fit passion every age supply;  
Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,<sup>o</sup> 275  
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw:  
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,  
A little louder, but as empty quite:  
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,  
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age: 280  
Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before,

Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays  
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days;  
 285 Each want of happiness by Hope supplied,  
 And each vacuity of sense by Pride:  
 These build as fast as Knowledge can destroy;  
 In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy;  
 One prospect lost, another still we gain,  
 290 And not a vanity is giv'n in vain:  
 Ev'n mean Self-love becomes, by force divine,  
 The scale to measure others' wants by thine.  
 See! and confess one comfort still must rise;  
 'Tis this, *Though Man's a fool, yet God is wise.*

### EPISTLE III

#### OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO SOCIETY

HERE then we rest: — 'The Universal Cause  
 Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.'  
 In all the madness of superfluous Health,  
 The trim of Pride, the impudence of Wealth,  
 5 Let this great truth be present night and day:  
 But most be present, if we preach or pray.  
 I. Look round our world; behold the chain of love  
 Combining all below and all above.  
 See plastic Nature working to this end,  
 10 The single atoms each to other tend,  
 Attract, attracted to, the next in place,  
 Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endued,  
Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good :  
See dying vegetables life sustain, 15  
See life dissolving vegetate again.  
All forms that perish other forms supply  
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die),  
Like bubbles on the sea of Matter borne,  
They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20  
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;  
One all-extending, all-preserving, soul  
Connects each being, greatest with the least;  
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;  
All serv'd, all serving: nothing stands alone; 25  
The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown.  
Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,  
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?  
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,  
For him as kindly spreads the flowery lawn. 30  
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?  
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.  
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?  
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.  
The bounding steed you pompously bestride 35  
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.  
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?  
The birds of Heav'n shall vindicate their grain.  
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?  
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer. 40  
The hog that ploughs not, nor obeys thy call,  
Lives on the labours of this lord of all.  
Know Nature's children all divide her care;  
The fur that warms a monarch warm'd a bear.

45 While Man exclaims, 'See all things for my use!'   
 'See man for mine!' replies a pamper'd goose:   
 And just as short of Reason he must fall,   
 Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'rful still the weak control;   
 50 Be Man the wit and tyrant of the whole:   
 Nature that tyrant checks; he only knows,   
 And helps, another creature's wants and woes.   
 Say will the falcon, stooping from above,   
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?

55 Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings?   
 Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings? —   
 Man cares for all: to birds he gives his woods,   
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods.   
 For some his Int'rest prompts him to provide,   
 60 For more his Pleasure, yet for more his Pride:   
 All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy   
 Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.   
 That very life his learned hunger craves,   
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves;   
 65 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast,   
 And till he ends the being makes it blest;   
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,   
 Than favour'd man<sup>o</sup> by touch ethereal slain.   
 The creature had his feast of life before;   
 70 Thou too must perish when thy feast is o'er!

To each unthinking being, Heav'n, a friend,   
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end:   
 To man imparts it, but with such a view   
 As while he dreads it, makes him hope it too;   
 75 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear,   
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.

Great standing miracle! that Heav'n assign'd  
Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with Reason or with Instinct blest,  
Know all enjoy that power which suits them best; 80  
To bliss alike by that direction tend,  
And find the means proportion'd to their end.  
Say, where full Instinct is th' unerring guide,  
What Pope or Council can they need beside?  
Reason, however able, cool at best, 85  
Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,  
Stays till we call, and then not often near;  
But honest Instinct comes a volunteer,  
Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit,  
While still too wide or short is human wit; 90  
Sure by quick Nature happiness to gain,  
Which heavier Reason labours at in vain.  
This, too, serves always; Reason, never long;  
One must go right, the other may go wrong.  
See then the acting and comparing powers 95  
One in their nature, which are two in ours;  
And Reason raise o'er Instinct as you can,  
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis Man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood  
To shun their poison and to choose their food? 100  
Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,  
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?  
Who made the spider parallels design,  
Sure as Demoivre,<sup>o</sup> without rule or line?  
Who bade the stork, Columbus-like, explore 105  
Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before?  
Who calls the council, states the certain day,  
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

## III. God in the nature of each being founds

- 110 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds;  
But as he framed a whole the whole to bless,  
On mutual wants built mutual happiness:  
So from the first eternal order ran,  
And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
- 115 Whate'er of life all-quick'ning ether keeps,  
Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,  
Or pours profuse on earth, one Nature feeds  
The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.  
Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
- 120 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood,  
Each loves itself, but not itself alone,  
Each sex desires alike, till two are one.  
Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace:  
They love themselves a third time in their race.
- 125 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,  
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;  
The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,  
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;  
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
- 130 Another love succeeds, another race.  
A longer care man's helpless kind demands;  
That longer care contracts more lasting bands:  
Reflection, Reason, still the ties improve,  
At once extend the int'rest and the love;
- 135 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn;  
Each virtue in each passion takes its turn;  
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,  
That graft benevolence on charities.  
Still as one brood and as another rose,
- 140 These natural love maintain'd, habitual those:

The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect man,  
Saw helpless him from whom their life began :  
Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,  
That pointed back to youth, this on to age ;  
While pleasure, gratitude, and hope, combin'd, 145  
Still spread the int'rest, and preserv'd the kind.

IV. Nor think in Nature's state they blindly trod ;  
The state of Nature was the reign of God :  
Self-love and Social at her birth began,  
Union the bond of all things, and of Man ; 150  
Pride then was not, nor arts, that pride to aid ;  
Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade ;  
The same his table, and the same his bed ;  
No murder clothed him, and no murder fed.  
In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155  
All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God :  
The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,  
Unbribed, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :  
Heav'n's attribute was universal care,  
And man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 160  
Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !  
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;  
Who, foe to Nature, hears the gen'ral groan,  
Murders their species, and betrays his own.  
But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165  
And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;  
The fury-passions from that blood began,  
And turn'd on man a fiercer savage, man.

See him from Nature rising slow to Art !  
To copy Instinct then was Reason's part : 170  
Thus then to man the voice of Nature spake —  
'Go, from the creatures thy instructions take :

Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield,  
Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;  
175 Thy arts of building from the bee receive;  
Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;  
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,  
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.  
Here too all forms of social union find,  
180 And hence let Reason late instruct mankind.  
Here subterranean works and cities see;  
There towns aërial on the waving tree;  
Learn each small people's genius, policies,  
The ants' republic, and the realm of bees:  
185 How those in common all their wealth bestow,  
And anarchy without confusion know;  
And these for ever, tho' a monarch reign,  
Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.  
Mark what unvaried laws preserve each state,  
190 Laws wise as Nature, and as fix'd as Fate.  
In vain thy Reason finer webs shall draw,  
Entangle justice in her net of law,  
And right, too rigid, harden into wrong,  
Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.  
195 Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures sway,  
Thus let the wiser make the rest obey;  
And for those arts mere Instinct could afford,  
Be crown'd as Monarchs, or as Gods ador'd.'

V. Great Nature spoke; observant man obey'd;  
200 Cities were built, societies were made:  
Here rose one little state; another near  
Grew by like means, and join'd thro' love or fear.  
Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,  
And there the streams in purer rills descend?



What war could ravish, commerce could bestow, 205  
And he return'd a friend who came a foe.  
Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,  
When Love was liberty, and Nature law.  
Thus states were form'd, the name of King unknown,  
Till common int'rest placed the sway in one. 210  
'Twas Virtue only (or in arts or arms,  
Diffusing blessings, or averting harms),  
The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,  
A prince the father of a people made.  
VI. Till then, by Nature crown'd, each patriarch sate 215  
King, priest, and parent of his growing state;  
On him, their second Providence, they hung,  
Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.  
He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,  
Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220  
Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound,  
Or fetch th' aërial eagle to the ground;  
Till drooping, sick'ning, dying, they began  
Whom they revered as God to mourn as Man:  
Then, looking up from sire to sire, explor'd 225  
One great first Father, and that first ador'd:  
Or plain tradition that this all begun,  
Convey'd unbroken faith from sire to son;  
The worker from the work distinct was known,  
And simple Reason never sought but one. 230  
Ere Wit oblique had broke that steady light,  
Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right;  
To virtue in the paths of pleasure trod,  
And own'd a father when he own'd a God.  
Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then, 235  
For Nature knew no right divine in men;

No ill could fear in God, and understood  
A sov'reign being but a sov'reign good;  
True faith, true policy, united ran;  
240 That was but love of God, and this of Man.  
Who first taught souls enslaved, and realms undone,  
Th' enormous faith of many made for one;  
That proud exception to all Nature's laws,  
T' invert the world, and counterwork its cause?  
245 Force first made conquest, and that conquest law;  
Till Superstition taught the tyrant awe,  
Then shared the tyranny, then lent it aid,  
And Gods of conquerors, Slaves of subjects made.  
She, 'midst the lightning's blaze and thunder's sound,  
250 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the  
ground,  
She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,  
To Power unseen, and mightier far than they:  
She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,  
Saw Gods descend, and Fiends infernal rise:  
255 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the bless'd abodes;  
Fear made her Devils, and weak hope her Gods;  
Gods, partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust;  
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,  
260 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.  
Zeal then, not Charity, became the guide,  
And Hell was built on spite, and Heav'n on pride:  
Then sacred seem'd th' ethereal vault no more;  
Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore:  
265 Then first the flamen tasted living food,  
Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood;  
With Heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,

And play'd the God an engine on his foe.

So drives Self-love thro' just and thro' unjust,  
To one man's power, ambition, lucre, lust: 270  
The same Self-love in all becomes the cause  
Of what restrains him, government and laws.  
For, what one likes if others like as well,  
What serves one will, when many wills rebel?  
How shall he keep what, sleeping or awake, 275  
A weaker may surprise, a stronger take?  
His safety must his liberty restrain:  
All join to guard what each desires to gain.  
Forc'd into virtue thus by self-defence,  
Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence: 280  
Self-love forsook the path it first pursued,  
And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then the studious head, or gen'rous mind  
Follower of God, or friend of human kind,  
Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285  
The faith and moral Nature gave before;  
Relum'd her ancient light, not kindled new;  
If not God's image, yet his shadow drew;  
Taught power's due use to people and to kings,  
Taught nor to slack nor strain its tender strings, 290  
The less or greater set so justly true,  
That touching one must strike the other too;  
Till jarring int'rests of themselves create  
Th' according music of a well-mix'd state.  
Such is the world's great harmony, that springs 295  
From order, union, full consent of things;  
Where small and great, where weak and mighty made  
To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade;  
More powerful each as needful to the rest,

- 300 And, in proportion as it blesses, blest;  
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring  
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.  
 For forms of government let fools contest;  
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best:  
 305 For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.  
 In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,  
 But all mankind's concern is Charity:  
 All must be false that thwart this one great end,  
 310 And all of God that bless mankind or mend.  
 Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives;  
 The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.  
 On their own axis as the planets run,  
 Yet make at once their circle round the sun;  
 315 So two consistent motions act the soul,  
 And one regards itself, and one the Whole.  
 Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,  
 And bade Self-love and Social be the same.

## EPISTLE IV

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RE-  
SPECT TO HAPPINESS

- O HAPPINESS! our being's end and aim!  
 Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name,  
 That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,  
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die;  
 5 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,  
 O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool and wise:

Plant of celestial seed ! if dropt below,  
 Say in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow ?  
 Fair opening to some court's propitious shine,  
 Or deep with diamonds in the flaming mine ? 10  
 Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,  
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field ?  
 Where grows ? — where grows it not ? If vain our toil,  
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil :  
 Fix'd to no spot is Happiness sincere ; 15  
 'Tis nowhere to be found, or ev'rywhere :  
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,  
 And fled from monarchs, ST. JOHN ! dwells with thee.

I. Ask of the Learn'd the way ? the Learn'd are blind,  
 This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind : 20  
 Some place the bliss in Action, some in Ease,  
 Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these ;  
 Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in Pain ;  
 Some swell'd to Gods, confess ev'n Virtue vain ;  
 Or indolent, to each extreme they fall, 25  
 To trust in everything, or doubt of all.°

Who thus define it, say they more or less  
 Than this, that happiness is happiness ?

II. Take Nature's path and mad Opinion's leave ;  
 All states can reach it, and all heads conceive ; 30  
 Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell ;  
 There needs but thinking right and meaning well :  
 And, mourn our various portions as we please,  
 Equal is common sense and common ease.

Remember, Man, 'the Universal Cause  
 Acts not by partial but by gen'ral laws,' 35  
 And makes what Happiness we justly call  
 Subsist not in the good of one, but all.

There's not a blessing individuals find,  
40 But some way leans and hearkens to the kind;  
No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,  
No cavern'd hermit, rests self-satisfied;  
Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,  
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend.  
45 Abstract what others feel, what others think,  
All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink:  
Each has his share; and who would more obtain,  
Shall find the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is Heav'n's first law; and, this confest,  
50 Some are and must be greater than the rest,  
More rich, more wise: but who infers from hence  
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.  
Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,  
If all are equal in their happiness:  
55 But mutual wants this happiness increase;  
All Nature's diff'rence keeps all Nature's peace.  
Condition, circumstance, is not the thing;  
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,  
In who obtain defence, or who defend,  
60 In him who is, or him who finds a friend:  
Heav'n breathes thro' every member of the whole  
One common blessing, as one common soul.  
But Fortune's gifts, if each alike possess,  
And each were equal, must not all contest?  
65 If then to all men happiness was meant,  
God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,  
And these be happy call'd, unhappy those;  
But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,  
70 While those are placed in hope and these in fear:

Not present good or ill the joy or curse,  
But future views of better or of worse.

O sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise  
By mountains piled on mountains to the skies°?  
Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75  
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

III. Know all the good that individuals find,  
Or God and Nature meant to mere mankind,  
Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,  
Lie in three words — Health, Peace, and Competence. 80  
But health consists with temperance alone,  
And peace, O Virtue! peace is all thy own.  
The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain;  
But these less taste them as they worse obtain.

Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85  
Who risk the most, that take wrong means or right?  
Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,  
Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?  
Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,  
'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains: 90  
And grant the bad what happiness they would,  
One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

O blind to truth and God's whole scheme below,  
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!  
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95  
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.  
But fools the good alone unhappy call,  
For ills or accidents that chance to all.  
See Falkland° dies, the virtuous and the just!  
See Godlike Turenne° prostrate on the dust! 100  
See Sidney° bleeds amid the martial strife! —  
Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?

Say, was it virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,  
Lamented Digby<sup>o</sup>! sunk thee to the grave?

105 Tell me, if virtue made the son expire,  
Why full of days and honour lives the sire?  
Why drew Marseilles<sup>o</sup> good bishop purer breath  
When Nature sicken'd, and each gale was death?  
Or why so long (in life if long can be)

110 Lent Heav'n a parent<sup>o</sup> to the poor and me?

What makes all physical or moral ill?

There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.

God sends not ill, if rightly understood,

Or partial ill is universal good,

115 Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall,  
Short and but rare till man improv'd it all.

We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain

That Righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,

As that the virtuous son is ill at ease

120 When his lewd father gave the dire disease.

Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause

Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws?

IV. Shall burning Ætna, if a sage<sup>o</sup> requires,

Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?

125 On air or sea new motions be imprest,  
O blameless Bethel<sup>o</sup>! to relieve thy breast?

When the loose mountain trembles from on high,

Shall gravitation cease if you go by?

Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,

130 For Chartres<sup>o</sup> head reserve the hanging wall?

V. But still this world, so fitted for the knave,

Contents us not. — A better shall we have?

A kingdom of the just then let it be;

But first consider how those just agree.



The good must merit God's peculiar care; 135  
But who but God can tell us who they are?  
One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own spirit fell;  
Another deems him instrument of Hell:  
If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing or its rod,  
This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140  
What shocks one part will edify the rest;  
Nor with one system can they all be blest.  
The very best will variously incline,  
And what rewards your virtue punish mine.  
*Whatever is, is right.* — This world, 'tis true, 145  
Was made for Cæsar — but for Titus<sup>o</sup> too:  
And which more bless'd? who chain'd his country, say,  
Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day?

VI. 'But sometimes Virtue starves while Vice is fed.'  
What then? is the reward of virtue bread? 150  
That vice may merit; 'tis the price of toil;  
The knave deserves it when he tills the soil,  
The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,  
Where Folly fights for kings or dives for gain.  
The good man may be weak, be indolent; 155  
Nor is his claim to plenty but content.  
But grant him riches, your demand is o'er.  
'No: shall the good want health, the good want power?'  
Add health and power, and every earthly thing.  
'Why bounded power? why private? why no king? 160  
Nay, why external for internal giv'n?  
Why is not man a God, and earth a Heav'n?'  
Who ask and reason thus will scarce conceive  
God gives enough while he has more to give:  
Immense the power, immense were the demand; 165  
Say at what part of Nature will they stand?

- What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,  
The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy,  
Is Virtue's prize. A better would you fix?
- 170 Then give humility a coach and six,  
Justice a conqueror's sword, or truth a gown,  
Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.  
Weak, foolish man! will Heav'n reward us there  
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
- 175 The boy and man an individual makes,  
Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?  
Go, like the Indian, in another life  
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife;  
As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
- 180 As toys and empires, for a godlike mind:  
Rewards, that either would to Virtue bring  
No joy, or be destructive of the thing:  
How oft by these at sixty are undone  
The virtues of a saint at twenty-one!
- 185 To whom can Riches give repute or trust,  
Content or pleasure, but the good and just?  
Judges and senates have been bought for gold,  
Esteem and Love were never to be sold.  
O fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
- 190 The lover and the love of humankind,  
Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,  
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.  
Honour and shame from no condition rise;  
Act well your part: there all the honour lies.
- 195 Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made;  
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade,  
The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd;  
The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.

'What differ more,' you cry, 'than crown and cowl?'  
I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool. 200  
You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,  
Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,  
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,  
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings, 205  
That thou mayst be by kings, or whores of kings,  
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,  
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:  
But by your fathers' worth if yours you rate,  
Count me those only who were good and great. 210  
Go! if your ancient but ignoble blood  
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,  
Go! and pretend your family is young,  
Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.  
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards? 215  
Alas! not all the blood of all the *Howards*.°

Look next on Greatness: say where Greatness lies.  
'Where but among the heroes and the wise?'  
Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed.  
From Macedonia's madman° to the Swede°; 220  
The whole strange purpose of their lives to find,  
Or make, an enemy of all mankind!  
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,  
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.  
No less alike the politic and wise; 225  
All sly slow things with circumspective eyes:  
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,  
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.  
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat:  
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great. 230

Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,  
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.  
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,  
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,  
235 Like good Aurelius<sup>o</sup> let him reign, or bleed  
Like Socrates<sup>o</sup>: — that man is great indeed!  
What's fame? a fancied life in others' breath;  
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.  
Just what you hear you have; and what's unknown  
240 The same, my lord, if Tully's or your own.  
All that we feel of it begins and ends  
In the small circle of our foes or friends;  
To all beside as much an empty shade,  
An Eugene<sup>o</sup> living as a Cæsar dead;  
245 Alike or when or where, they shone or shine,  
Or on the Rubicon or on the Rhine.  
A Wit's a feather, and a Chief a rod;  
An Honest Man's the noblest work of God.  
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,  
250 As Justice tears his body from the grave;  
When what t' oblivion better were resign'd  
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.  
All fame is foreign but of true desert,  
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:  
255 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs  
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas:  
And more true joy Marcellus<sup>o</sup> exiled feels  
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.  
In Parts superior what advantage lies?  
260 Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise?  
'Tis but to know how little can be known,  
To see all others' faults, and feel our own:

Condemn'd in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,  
Without a second, or without a judge.  
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land? 265  
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.  
Painful præminence! yourself to view  
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account;  
Make fair deductions; see to what they mount; 270  
How much of other each is sure to cost;  
How much for other oft is wholly lost;  
How inconsistent greater goods with these;  
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease.  
Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275  
Say, wouldst thou be the man to whom they fall?  
To sigh for ribands if thou art so silly,  
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra<sup>o</sup> or Sir Billy.  
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?  
Look but on Gripus or on Gripus' wife. 280  
If parts allure thee, think how Bacon<sup>o</sup> shined,  
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind!  
Or, ravish'd with the whistling of a name,  
See Cromwell damn'd to everlasting fame!  
If all united thy ambition call, 285  
From ancient story learn to scorn them all:  
There in the rich, the honour'd, famed, and great,  
See the false scale of Happiness complete!  
In hearts of Kings or arms of Queens who lay,  
How happy those to ruin, these betray. 290  
Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,  
From dirt and sea-weed, as proud Venice rose;  
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,  
And all that rais'd the Hero sunk the Man:

295 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,  
But stain'd with blood, or ill-exchanged for gold;  
Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,  
Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.  
O wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame  
300 E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame!  
What greater bliss attends their close of life?  
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,  
The trophied arches, storied halls invade,  
And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.

305 Alas! not dazzled with their noontide ray,  
Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day;  
The whole amount of that enormous fame,  
A tale that blends their glory with their shame!

VII. Know then this truth (enough for man to know),

310 'Virtue alone is happiness below;  
The only point where human bliss stands still,  
And tastes the good without the fall to ill;  
Where only merit constant pay receives,  
Is bless'd in what it takes and what it gives;

315 The joy unequall'd if its end it gain,  
And, if it lose, attended with no pain;  
Without satiety, tho' e'er so bless'd,  
And but more relish'd as the more distress'd:  
The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,

320 Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears:  
Good from each object, from each place acquired,  
For ever exercised, yet never tired;  
Never elated while one man's oppress'd;  
Never dejected while another's bless'd:

325 And where no wants, no wishes can remain,  
Since but to wish more virtue is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow !  
Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know :  
Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,  
The bad must miss, the good untaught will find : 330  
Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,  
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God ;  
Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,  
Joins Heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine ;  
Sees that no being any bliss can know, 335  
But touches some above and some below ;  
Learns from this union of the rising whole  
The first, last purpose of the human soul ;  
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,  
All end, in love of God and love of Man. 340

For him alone Hope leads from goal to goal,  
And opens still and opens on his soul,  
Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,  
It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.  
He sees why Nature plants in man alone 345  
Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown  
(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind  
Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find):  
Wise is her present ; she connects in this  
His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss ; 350  
At once his own bright prospect to be blest,  
And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to Divine,  
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.  
Is this too little for the boundless heart ? 355  
Extend it, let thy enemies have part :  
Grasp the whole world of reason, life, and sense,  
In one close system of benevolence :

Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,

360 And height of Bliss but height of Charity.

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul  
Must rise from individual to the whole.

Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;

365 The centre mov'd, a circle straight succeeds,  
Another still, and still another spreads;

Friends, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;  
His country next; and next all human race;

Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind

370 Take ev'ry creature in of ev'ry kind:

Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
And Heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come then, my Friend<sup>o</sup>! my Genius! come along,  
O master of the poet and the song!

375 And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends,  
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,

Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,  
To fall with dignity, with temper rise:

Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer

380 From grave to gay, from lively to severe;

Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,

Intent to reason, or polite to please.

O! while along the stream of time thy name

Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,

385 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,

Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?

When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,

Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,

Shall then this verse to future age pretend

390 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?



That, urged by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art  
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart:  
For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light,  
Show'd erring pride, *Whatever is, is right*;  
That Reason, Passion, answer one great aim;  
That true Self-love and Social are the same;  
That Virtue only makes our bliss below,  
And all our knowledge is, *ourselves to know*.

# AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

(1709)

## PART I

'Tis hard to say if greater want of skill  
Appear in writing or in judging ill;  
But of the two less dangerous is th' offence  
To tire our patience than mislead our sense°:  
5 Some few in that, but numbers err in this;  
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;  
A fool might once himself alone expose;  
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.  
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none  
10 Go just alike, yet each believes his own.  
In Poets as true Genius is but rare,  
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share;  
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,  
These born to judge, as well as those to write.  
15 Let such° teach others who themselves excel,  
And censure freely who have written well;  
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,  
But are not Critics to their judgment too?  
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find  
20 Most° have the seeds of judgment in their mind:  
Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light;  
The lines, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right:

But as the slightest sketch, if justly traced, }  
 Is by ill col'ring but the more disgraced, }  
 So by false learning is good sense defaced: }  
 Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,° 25  
 And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools:  
 In search of wit these lose their common sense,  
 And then turn Critics in their own defence:  
 Each burns alike, who can or cannot write, 30  
 Or with a rival's or an eunuch's spite.  
 All fools have still an itching to deride,  
 And fain would be upon the laughing side.  
 If Mævius° scribble in Apollo's° spite,  
 There are who° judge still worse than he can write. 35  
 Some have at first for Wits,° then Poets pass'd;  
 Turn'd Critics next, and prov'd plain Fools at last.  
 Some neither can for Wits nor Critics pass,  
 As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.  
 Those half-learn'd witlings, numerous in our isle, 40  
 As half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile;  
 Unfinish'd things, one knows not what to call,  
 Their generation's° so equivocal;  
 To tell them would a hundred tongues require,  
 Or one vain Wit's, that might a hundred tire. 45  
 But you who seek to give and merit fame,  
 And justly bear a Critic's noble name,  
 Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,  
 How far your Genius, Taste, and Learning go,  
 Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet, 50  
 And mark that point where Sense and Dulness meet.  
 Nature to all things fix'd the limits fit,  
 And wisely curb'd proud man's pretending wit.  
 As on the land while here the ocean gains,

- 55 In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;  
Thus in the soul while Memory prevails,  
The solid power of Understanding fails;  
Where beams of warm Imagination play,  
The Memory's soft figures melt away.
- 60 One Science only will one genius fit;  
So vast is Art, so narrow human wit:  
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,  
But oft in those confin'd to single parts.  
Like Kings we lose the conquests gain'd before,
- 65 By vain ambition still to make them more:  
Each might his sev'ral<sup>o</sup> province well command,  
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
- First follow Nature, and your judgment frame  
By her just standard, which is still the same;
- 70 Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,  
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,  
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,<sup>o</sup>  
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.<sup>o</sup>  
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
- 75 Works without show, and without pomp presides.  
In some fair body thus th' informing soul  
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole;  
Each motion guides, and every nerve sustains,  
Itself unseen, but in th' effects remains.
- 80 Some, to whom Heav'n in wit<sup>o</sup> has been profuse,  
Want as much more to turn it to its use;  
For Wit and Judgment often are at strife,  
Tho' meant each other's aid, like man and wife.  
'Tis more to guide<sup>o</sup> than spur the Muse's steed,
- 85 Restrain his fury than provoke his speed:  
The winged courser,<sup>o</sup> like a gen'rous horse,

Shows most true mettle when you check his course.

Those rules of old, discover'd, not devised,  
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;  
Nature, like Liberty, is but restrain'd 90  
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.

Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites<sup>o</sup>  
When to repress and when indulge our flights:  
High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,  
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod; 95  
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,  
And urged the rest by equal steps to rise.

Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,  
She drew from them what they derived from Heav'n.  
The gen'rous Critic fann'd the poet's fire, 100  
And taught the world with reason to admire.

Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,  
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd:  
But following Wits from that intention stray'd:  
Who could not win the mistress woo'd the maid; 105  
Against the Poets their own arms they turn'd,  
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.

So modern 'pothecaries, taught the art  
By doctors' bills<sup>o</sup> to play the doctor's part,  
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules, 110  
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.

Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey;  
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they;  
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,  
Write dull receipts how poems may be made; 115  
These leave the sense their learning to display,  
And those explain the meaning quite away.

You then whose judgment the right course would steer,

- Know well each ancient's proper character;  
 120 His fable,<sup>o</sup> subject, scope in every page;  
 Religion, country, genius of his age:  
 Without all these at once before your eyes,  
 Cavil you may, but never criticise.  
 Be Homer's works your study and delight,  
 125 Read them by day, and meditate by night;  
 Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,  
 And trace the Muses upward to their spring.  
 Still with itself compared, his text peruse;  
 And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.<sup>o</sup>  
 130 When first young Maro in his boundless mind  
 A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,  
 Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,  
 And but<sup>o</sup> from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw;  
 But when t' examine ev'ry part he came,  
 135 Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.  
 Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design,  
 And rules as strict his labour'd work confine  
 As if the Stagyrte<sup>o</sup> o'erlook'd each line. }  
 Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;  
 140 To copy Nature is to copy them.  
 Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,  
 For there's a happiness<sup>o</sup> as well as care.  
 Music resembles poetry; in each  
 Are nameless graces which no methods teach, }  
 145 And which a master-hand alone can reach.  
 If, where the rules not far enough extend,  
 (Since rules were made but to promote their end)  
 Some lucky license answer to the full  
 Th' intent proposed, that license is a rule.  
 150 Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,

May boldly deviate from the common track.  
 Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
 And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend;  
 From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,  
 And snatch a grace beyond the reach of Art, 155  
 Which, without passing thro' the judgment, gains  
 The heart, and all its end at once attains.  
 In prospects<sup>o</sup> thus some objects please our eyes, }  
 Which out of Nature's common order rise, }  
 The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice. } 160  
 But tho' the ancients thus their rules invade,  
 (As Kings dispense with laws themselves have made)  
 Moderns, beware! or if you must offend  
 Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end;  
 Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need; 165  
 And have at least their precedent to plead;  
 The Critic else proceeds without remorse,  
 Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.

I know there are to whose presumptuous thoughts  
 Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults. 170  
 Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear,  
 Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,  
 Which, but proportion'd to their light or place,  
 Due distance reconciles to form and grace.  
 A prudent chief not always must display 175  
 His powers in equal ranks and fair array,  
 But with th' occasion and the place comply,  
 Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.  
 Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,  
 Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream. 180

Still green with bays each ancient altar stands  
 Above the reach of sacrilegious hands,<sup>o</sup>

Secure from flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,  
Destructive war, and all-involving Age.  
185 See from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!  
Hear in all tongues consenting pæans ring!  
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,  
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.  
Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days,  
190 Immortal heirs of universal praise!  
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,  
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;  
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,  
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!  
195 O may some spark of your celestial fire  
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,  
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights,  
Glow while he reads, but trembles as he writes)  
To teach vain Wits a science little known,  
200 T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own.

## PART II

OF all the causes which conspire to blind  
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,  
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,  
Is Pride, the never-failing vice of fools.  
5 Whatever Nature has in worth denied  
She gives in large recruits of needful Pride:  
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find  
What wants in blood and spirits swell'd with wind:  
Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defence,  
10 And fills up all the mighty void of Sense:



If once right Reason drives that cloud away,  
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.  
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,  
Make use of ev'ry friend — and ev'ry foe.

A little learning is a dangerous thing; 15  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian° spring:  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.  
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,  
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts, 20  
While from the bounded level of our mind  
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind:  
But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise  
New distant scenes of endless science rise!  
So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try, 25  
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky;  
Th' eternal snows appear already past,  
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:  
But those attain'd, we tremble to survey  
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way; 30  
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,  
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

A perfect judge will read each work of wit  
With the same spirit that its author writ;  
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find 35  
Where Nature moves, and Rapture warms the mind:  
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,°  
The gen'rous pleasure to be charm'd with wit.  
But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,  
Correctly cold, and regularly low, 40  
That shunning faults one quiet tenor keep,  
We cannot blame indeed — but we may sleep.

In Wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts  
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;  
45 'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,  
But the joint force and full result of all.  
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome,  
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine,° O Rome!)  
No single parts unequally surprise,  
50 All comes united to th' admiring eyes;  
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length, appear;  
The whole at once is bold and regular.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.  
55 In every work regard the writer's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend;  
And if the means be just, the conduct true,  
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.  
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,  
60 T' avoid great errors must the less commit;  
Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,  
For not to know some trifles is a praise.  
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,  
Still make the whole depend upon a part:  
65 They talk of Principles, but Notions prize,  
And all to one lov'd folly sacrifice.

Once on a time La Mancha's Knight,° they say,  
A certain bard encount'ring on the way,  
Discours'd in terms as just, with looks as sage,  
70 As e'er could Dennis,° of the Grecian Stage;  
Concluding all were desperate sots and fools  
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.  
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,  
Produced his play, and begg'd the knight's advice;

Made him observe the Subject and the Plot, 75  
 The Manners, Passions, Unities; what not?  
 All which exact to rule were brought about,  
 Were but a combat in the lists left out.

‘What! leave the combat out?’ exclaims the knight.

‘Yes, or we must renounce the Stagyrity.’ 80

‘Not so, by Heaven! (he answers in a rage)  
 Knights, squires, and steeds must enter on the stage.’

‘So vast a throng the stage can ne’er contain.’

‘Then build a new, or act it in a plain.’

Thus critics of less judgment than caprice, 85  
 Curious, not knowing, not exact, but nice,<sup>o</sup>  
 Form short ideas, and offend in Arts  
 (As most in Manners), by a love to parts.

Some to Conceit<sup>o</sup> alone their taste confine,  
 And glitt’ring thoughts struck out at every line; 90  
 Pleas’d with a work where nothing’s just or fit,  
 One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.

Poets, like painters, thus unskill’d to trace  
 The naked nature and the living grace,  
 With gold and jewels cover every part, 95  
 And hide with ornaments their want of Art.

True Wit is Nature to advantage dress’d,  
 What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d;  
 Something whose truth convinced at sight we find,  
 That gives us back the image of our mind. 100

As shades more sweetly recommend the light,  
 So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit:  
 For works may have more wit than does them good,  
 As bodies perish thro’ excess of blood.

Others for language all their care express, 105  
 And value books, as women men, for dress:

- Their praise is still — the Style is excellent;  
The Sense they humbly take upon content.<sup>o</sup>  
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,  
110 Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.  
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,  
Its gaudy colours spreads on every place;  
The face of Nature we no more survey,  
All glares alike, without distinction gay;  
115 But true expression, like th' unchanging sun, }  
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon; }  
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.  
Expression is the dress of thought, and still  
Appears more decent as more suitable.  
120 A vile Conceit in pompous words express'd  
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd:  
For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,<sup>o</sup>  
As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court.  
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,  
125 Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;  
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,  
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile;  
Unlucky as Fungoso<sup>o</sup> in the play,  
These sparks<sup>o</sup> with awkward vanity display  
130 What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;  
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,  
As apes our grandsires in their doublets drest.  
In words as fashions the same rule will hold,  
Alike fantastic if too new or old:  
135 Be not the first by whom the new are tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.  
But most<sup>o</sup> by Numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong.

In the bright Muse tho' thousand charms conspire,  
 Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire; 140  
 Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
 Not mend their minds; as some to church repair, }  
 Not for the doctrine, but the music there.  
 These° equal syllables alone require,  
 Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire, 145  
 While expletives° their feeble aid do join,  
 And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:  
 While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,  
 With sure returns of still expected rhymes;  
 Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,' 150  
 In the next line, it 'whispers thro' the trees;'  
 If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep,'  
 The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with 'sleep;'  
 Then, at the last and only couplet, fraught  
 With some unmeaning thing they call a thought, 155  
 A needless Alexandrine° ends the song,  
 That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.  
 Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know  
 What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;  
 And praise the easy vigour of a line 160  
 Where Denham's° strength and Waller's° sweetness join.  
 True ease in writing comes from Art, not Chance,  
 As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.  
 'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence;  
 The sound must seem an echo to the sense. 165  
 Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;  
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
 The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.  
 When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw, 170

The line, too, labours, and the words move slow :  
Not so when swift Camilla° scours the plain,  
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.  
Hear how Timotheus° varied lays surprise,  
175 And bid alternate passions fall and rise !  
While at each change the son of Libyan Jove°  
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love ;  
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,  
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow :  
180 Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,  
And the world's Victor stood subdued by sound !  
The power of music all our hearts allow,  
And what Timotheus was is Dryden now.

Avoid extremes, and shun the fault of such  
185 Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.  
At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence ;  
That always shows great pride or little sense :  
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best  
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.  
190 Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move ;  
For fools admire, but men of sense approve :  
As things seem large which we thro' mist descry,  
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

Some° foreign writers, some our own despise ;  
195 The ancients only, or the moderns prize.  
Thus Wit, like Faith, by each man is applied  
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.  
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,  
And force that sun but on a part to shine,  
200 Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,  
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes ;  
Which from the first has shone on ages past,

Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;  
Tho' each<sup>o</sup> may feel increases and decays,  
And see now clearer and now darker days. 205  
Regard not then if wit be old or new,  
But blame the False and value still the True.

Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,  
But catch the spreading notion of the town;  
They reason and conclude by precedent, 210  
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.  
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then  
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.  
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he  
That in proud dulness joins with quality<sup>o</sup>; 215  
A constant critic at the great man's board,  
To fetch and carry nonsense for my lord.  
What woful stuff this madrigal would be  
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer or me!  
But let a lord once own the happy lines, 220  
How the Wit brightens! how the Style refines!  
Before his sacred name flies every fault,  
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!

The vulgar<sup>o</sup> thus thro' imitation err,  
As oft the learn'd by being singular; 225  
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng  
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong.  
So schismatics the plain believers quit,  
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.  
Some praise at morning what they blame at night, 230  
But always think the last opinion right.  
A Muse by these is like a mistress used,  
This hour she's idolized, the next abused;  
While their weak heads, like towns unfortified,

- 235 'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.  
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still they say;  
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.  
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;  
Our wiser sons no doubt will think us so.
- 240 Once school-divines<sup>o</sup> this zealous isle o'erspread;  
Who knew most sentences<sup>o</sup> was deepest read.  
Faith, Gospel, all seem'd made to be disputed,  
And none had sense enough to be confuted.  
Scotists<sup>o</sup> and Thomists<sup>o</sup> now in peace remain
- 245 Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane.<sup>o</sup>  
If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,  
What wonder modes in Wit should take their turn?  
Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,  
The current Folly proves the ready Wit;
- 250 And authors think their reputation safe,  
Which lives as long as fools are pleas'd to laugh.  
Some, valuing those of their own side or mind,  
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:  
Fondly we think we honour merit then,
- 255 When we but praise ourselves in other men.  
Parties in wit attend on those of state,  
And public faction doubles private hate.  
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,  
In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaux:
- 260 But sense survived when merry jests were past;  
For rising merit will buoy up at last.  
Might he return and bless once more our eyes,  
New Blackmores<sup>o</sup> and new Milbournes<sup>o</sup> must arise.  
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
- 265 Zoilus<sup>o</sup> again would start up from the dead.  
Envy will Merit as its shade pursue,



But like a shadow proves the substance true;  
For envied Wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known  
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.  
When first that sun too powerful beams displays, 270  
It draws up vapours which obscure its rays;  
But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,  
Reflect new glories, and augment the day.

Be thou the first true merit to befriend;  
His praise is lost who stays till all commend. 275  
Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,  
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.

No longer now that Golden Age appears,  
When patriarch wits survived a thousand years°:  
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost, 280  
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast:  
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,  
And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.

So when the faithful pencil has design'd  
Some bright idea of the master's mind, 285  
Where a new world leaps out at his command,  
And ready Nature waits upon his hand;  
When the ripe colours soften and unite,  
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;  
When mellowing years their full perfection give, 290  
And each bold figure just begins to live,  
The treach'rous colours the fair art betray,  
And all the bright creation fades away!

Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things,  
Atones not for that envy which it brings: 295  
In youth alone its° empty praise we boast,  
But soon the short-lived vanity is lost;  
Like some fair flower the early Spring supplies,

That gaily blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.

300 What is this Wit, which must our cares employ ?

The owner's wife that other men enjoy ;

Then most our trouble still when most admired,

And still the more we give, the more required ;

Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,

305 Sure some to vex, but never all to please,

'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun ;

By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone !

If Wit so much from Ignorance undergo,

Ah, let not Learning too commence<sup>o</sup> its foe !

310 Of old those met rewards who could excel,

And such were prais'd who but endeavour'd well ;

Tho' triumphs were to gen'als only due,

Crowns were reserv'd to grace the soldiers too.

Now they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown

315 Employ their pains to spurn some others down ;

And while self-love each jealous writer rules,

Contending wits become the sport of fools ;

But still the worst with most regret commend,

For each ill author is as bad a friend.

320 To what base ends, and by what abject ways,

Are mortals urged thro' sacred lust of praise !

Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,

Nor in the critic let the man be lost !

Good nature and good sense must ever join ;

325 To err is human, to forgive divine.

But if in noble minds some dregs remain,

Not yet purged off, of spleen and sour disdain,

Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,

Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.

330 No pardon vile obscenity should find,

Tho' Wit and Art conspire to move your mind;  
But dulness with obscenity must prove  
As shameful sure as impotence in love.  
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease  
Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large increase: 335  
When love was all an easy monarch's<sup>o</sup> care,  
Seldom at council, never in a war;  
Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ;  
Nay wits had pensions, and young lords had wit;  
The Fair sat panting at a courtier's play, 340  
And not a mask went unimprov'd away;  
The modest fan was lifted up no more,  
And virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before.  
The following license of a foreign reign  
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus<sup>o</sup> drain; 345  
Then unbelieving priests reform'd the nation,  
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;  
Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,  
Lest God himself should seem too absolute;  
Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare, 350  
And vice admired to find a flatt'rer there!  
Encouraged thus, Wit's Titans braved the skies,  
And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemies.  
These monsters, Critics! with your darts engage,  
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage! 355  
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,  
Will needs mistake an author into vice:  
All seems infected that th' infected spy,  
As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.

## PART III

LEARN then what morals Critics ought to show,  
For 'tis but half a judge's task to know.  
'Tis not enough Taste, Judgment, Learning join;  
In all you speak let Truth and Candour shine;

5 That not alone what to your Sense is due  
All may allow, but seek your friendship too.

Be silent always when you doubt your Sense,  
And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence.

Some positive persisting fops we know,  
10 Who if once wrong will needs be always so;  
But you with pleasure own your errors past,  
And make each day a critique on the last.

'Tis not enough your counsel still be true;  
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do.  
15 Men must be taught as if you taught them not,  
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.  
Without good breeding truth is disapprov'd;  
That only makes superior Sense belov'd.

Be niggards of advice on no pretence,  
20 For the worst avarice is that of Sense.  
With mean complacence ne'er betray your trust,  
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.

Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;  
Those best can bear reproof who merit praise.  
25 'Twere well might critics still this freedom take,  
But Appius<sup>o</sup> reddens at each word you speak,  
And stares tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,  
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.  
Fear most to tax an honourable fool,

Whose right it is, uncensured to be dull: 30  
Such without Wit, are poets when they please,  
As without Learning they can take degrees.  
Leave dangerous truths to unsuccessful satires,  
And flattery to fulsome dedicators;  
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more 35  
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.  
'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,  
And charitably let the dull be vain;  
Your silence there is better than your spite,  
For who can rail so long<sup>o</sup> as they can write? 40  
Still humming on their drowsy course they keep,  
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep.  
False steps but help them to renew the race,  
As, after stumbling, jades will mend their pace.  
What crowds of these, impenitently bold, 45  
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,  
Still run on poets, in a raging vein,  
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,  
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,  
And rhyme with all the rage of impotence! 50  
Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true  
There are as mad abandon'd critics too.  
The bookful blockhead ignorantly read,  
With loads of learned lumber in his head,  
With his own tongue still edifies his ears, 55  
And always list'ning to himself appears.  
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,  
From Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's<sup>o</sup> Tales.  
With him most authors steal their works, or buy;  
Garth<sup>o</sup> did not write his own Dispensary. 60  
Name a new play, and he's the poet's friend;

- Nay, show'd his faults — but when would poets mend?  
No place so sacred from such fops is barr'd,  
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard°:  
65 Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead;  
For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.  
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,  
It still looks home, and short excursions makes; }  
But rattling nonsense in full volley breaks }
- 70 And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,  
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.  
But where's the man who counsel can bestow,  
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?  
Unbiass'd or by favour or by spite;  
75 Not dully prepossess'd nor blindly right;  
Tho' learn'd, well bred, and tho' well bred sincere;  
Modestly bold, and humanly severe;  
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,  
And gladly praise the merit of a foe;  
80 Bless'd with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd,  
A knowledge both of books and humankind;  
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;  
And love to praise, with reason on his side?  
Such once were critics; such the happy few  
85 Athens and Rome in better ages knew.  
The mighty Stagyrte first left the shore,  
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore;  
He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,  
Led by the light of the Mæonian° star.  
90 Poets, a race long unconfin'd and free,  
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,  
Receiv'd his laws, and stood convinc'd 'twas fit  
Who conquer'd Nature should preside o'er Wit.

Horace still charms with graceful negligence,  
 And without method talks us into sense; 95  
 Will, like a friend, familiarly convey  
 The truest notions in the easiest way.  
 He who, supreme in judgment as in wit,  
 Might boldly censure as he boldly writ,  
 Yet judg'd with coolness, though he sung with fire; 100  
 His precepts teach but what his works inspire.  
 Our critics take a contrary extreme,  
 They judge with fury, but they write with phlegm;  
 Nor suffers Horace more in wrong translations  
 By Wits, than Critics in as wrong quotations. 105  
 See Dionysius<sup>o</sup> Homer's thoughts refine,  
 And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line!  
 Fancy and art in gay Petronius<sup>o</sup> please,  
 The Scholar's learning with the courtier's ease.  
 In grave Quintilian's<sup>o</sup> copious work we find 110  
 The justest rules and clearest method join'd.  
 Thus useful arms in magazines we place,  
 All ranged in order, and disposed with grace;  
 But less to please the eye than arm the hand,  
 Still fit for use, and ready at command. 115  
 Thee, bold Longinus<sup>o</sup>! all the Nine inspire,  
 And bless their critic with a poet's fire:  
 An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust,  
 With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;  
 Whose own example strengthens all his laws, 120  
 And is himself that great sublime he draws.  
 Thus long succeeding critics justly reign'd,  
 License repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd:  
 Learning and Rome alike in empire grew,  
 And arts still follow'd where her eagles flew; 125

From the same foes at last both felt their doom,  
And the same age saw learning fall and Rome.  
With tyranny then superstition join'd,  
As that the body, this enslaved the mind;  
130 Much was believ'd, but little understood,  
And to be dull was construed to be good;  
A second deluge learning thus o'errun,  
And the monks finish'd what the Goths<sup>o</sup> begun.  
At length Erasmus,<sup>o</sup> that great injur'd name,  
135 (The glory of the priesthood and the shame!)  
Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,  
And drove those holy Vandals<sup>o</sup> off the stage.  
But see! each Muse in Leo's<sup>o</sup> golden days  
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays.  
140 Rome's ancient genius, o'er its ruins spread,  
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.  
Then sculpture and her sister arts revive;  
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;  
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;  
145 A Raphael<sup>o</sup> painted and a Vida sung<sup>o</sup>:  
Immortal Vida! on whose honour'd brow  
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow:  
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,  
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!  
150 But soon by impious arms from Latium chased,  
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd;  
Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance,  
But critic learning flourish'd most in France;  
The rules a nation born to serve obeys,  
155 And Boileau<sup>o</sup> still in right of Horace sways.  
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,  
And kept unconquer'd and uncivilized;



Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,  
We still defied the Romans, as of old.  
Yet some there were, among the sounder few 160  
Of those who less presumed and better knew,  
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,  
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws.  
Such was the Muse<sup>o</sup> whose rules and practice tell  
'Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well.' 165  
Such was Roscommon,<sup>o</sup> not more learn'd than good,  
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood;  
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,  
And every author's merit but his own.  
Such late was Walsh<sup>o</sup> — the Muse's judge and friend, 170  
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;  
To failings mild but zealous for desert,  
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.  
This humble praise, lamented Shade! receive;  
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give: 175  
The Muse whose early voice you taught to sing,  
Prescribed her heights, and pruned her tender wing,  
(Her guide now lost), no more attempts to rise,  
But in low numbers short excursions tries;  
Content if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view, 180  
The learn'd reflect on what before they knew;  
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;  
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame;  
Averse alike to flatter or offend;  
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend. 185

## EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT<sup>o</sup>

(1635?)

*P.* 'SHUT, shut the door, good John<sup>o</sup>!' fatigued, I said;  
'Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.'

The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt  
All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out:

5 Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,  
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?

They pierce my thickets, thro' my grot<sup>o</sup> they glide,  
By land, by water, they renew the charge,

10 They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.

No place is sacred, not the church is free,

Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:

Then from the Mint<sup>o</sup> walks forth the man of rhyme,  
Happy to catch me just at dinner time.

15 Is there a Parson much bemused in beer,

A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,

A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,

Who pens a stanza when he should engross?

Is there who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls

20 With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?

All fly to TWIT'NAM,<sup>o</sup> and in humble strain

Apply to me to keep them mad or vain,

Arthur,<sup>o</sup> whose giddy son neglects the laws,

Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:

Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope, 25  
And curses Wit and Poetry, and Pope.

Friend to my life (which did not you prolong,  
The world had wanted many an idle song) !  
What Drop or Nostrum can this plague remove?  
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love? 30

A dire dilemma ! either way I'm sped ;  
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.  
Seiz'd and tied down to judge, how wretched I !  
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.

To laugh were want of goodness and of grace, 35  
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.

I sit with sad civility, I read  
With honest anguish and an aching head,°  
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,  
This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years.'° 40

'Nine years !' cries he, who, high in Drury lane,°  
Lull'd by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,  
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,°  
Obliged by hunger and request of friends:

'The piece, you think, is incorrect ? why, take it ! 45  
I'm all submission : what you'd have it — make it.'

Three things another's modest wishes bound,  
'My friendship, and a Prologue, and ten pound.'  
Pitholeon° sends to me : 'You know his Grace,  
I want a patron ; ask him for a place.' 50

Pitholeon libell'd me — 'But here's a letter  
Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no better.  
Dare you refuse him ? Curll° invites to dine,  
He'll write a *Journal*,° or he'll turn Divine.'

Bless me ! a packet. — 'Tis a stranger sues, 55  
A Virgin Tragedy,° an Orphan Muse.

If I dislike it, 'Furies, death, and rage!'

If I approve, 'Commend it to the stage.'

There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,

60 The players and I are, luckily, no friends.<sup>o</sup>

Fired that the house rejects him, 'Sdeath, I'll print it,

And shame the fools — your int'rest, Sir, with Lintot.<sup>o</sup>

Lintot, dull rogue, will think your price too much:

'Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch.'

65 All my demurs but double his attacks;

At last he whispers, 'Do, and we go snacks.'

Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door;

'Sir, let me see your works and you no more.'

'Tis sung, when Midas<sup>o</sup> ears began to spring

70 (Midas, a sacred person and a king),

His very Minister<sup>o</sup> who spied them first

(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak or burst.

And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,

When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?

75 A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dangerous things;

I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;

Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick,

'Tis nothing — P. Nothing! if they bite and kick?

Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,

80 That secret to each fool, that he's an ass:

The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)

The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.

You think this cruel? take it for a rule,

No creature smarts so little as a fool.

85 Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee break,

Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack<sup>o</sup>:

Pit, Box, and Gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,

Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.

Who shames a Scribbler? break one cobweb thro'  
 He spins the slight self-pleasing thread anew: 90  
 Destroy his fib, or sophistry — in vain!  
 The creature's at his dirty work again,  
 Throned in the centre of his thin designs,  
 Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines.  
 Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet or Peer 95  
 Lost the arch'd eyebrow or Parnassian sneer?  
 And has not Colley° still his lord and whore?  
 His butchers Henley°? his freemasons Moore°?  
 Does not one table Bavius still admit?  
 Still to one Bishop Philips° seem a wit? 100  
 Still Sappho° — A. Hold! for God's sake — you'll  
 offend.

No names — be calm — learn prudence of a friend.  
 I too could write, and I am twice as tall;  
 But foes like these — P. One flatt'rer's worse than all.  
 Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right, 105  
 It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.  
 A fool quite angry is quite innocent:  
 Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent.

One dedicates in high heroic prose,  
 And ridicules beyond a hundred foes; 110  
 One from all Grub-street will my fame defend,  
 And, more abusive, calls himself my friend:  
 This prints my *Letters*, that expects a bribe,  
 And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe!'

There are who to my person pay their court: 115  
 I cough like Horace; and tho' lean, am short;  
 Ammon's great son° one shoulder had too high,  
 Such Ovid's nose, and 'Sir! you have an eye° —'  
 Go on, obliging creatures! make me see

- 120 All that disgraced my betters met in me.  
 Say, for my comfort, languishing in bed,  
 'Just so immortal Maro held his head:'  
 And when I die, be sure you let me know  
 Great Homer died three thousand years ago.
- 125 Why did I write? what sin to me unknown  
 Dipp'd me in ink, my parents', or my own?  
 As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
 I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came°:  
 I left no calling for this idle trade,
- 130 No duty broke, no father disobey'd:  
 The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,  
 To help me thro' this long disease my life,  
 To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy art and care,  
 And teach the being you preserv'd, to bear.
- 135 A. But why then publish? P. Granville° the polite,  
 And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;  
 Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,  
 And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endured my lays;  
 The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;
- 140 Ev'n mitred Rochester° would nod the head,  
 And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends before)  
 With open arms receiv'd one poet more.  
 Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!  
 Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
- 145 From these the world will judge of men and books,  
 Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.°  
 Soft were my numbers; who could take offence  
 While pure description held the place of sense°?  
 Like gentle Fanny's° was my flowery theme,
- 150 'A painted mistress, or a purling stream.'  
 Yet then did Gildon° draw his venal quill;

I wish'd the man a dinner, and sat still :  
Yet then did Dennis<sup>o</sup> rave in furious fret ;  
I never answer'd ; I was not in debt.  
If want provoked, or madness made them print, 155  
I waged no war with Bedlam or the Mint.<sup>o</sup>

Did some more sober critic come abroad ;  
If wrong, I smiled, if right, I kiss'd the rod.  
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,  
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense. 160  
Commas and points they set exactly right,  
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.  
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel graced these ribalds,  
From slashing Bentleys<sup>o</sup> down to piddling Tibbalds.<sup>o</sup>  
Each wight who reads not, and but scans and spells, 165  
Each word-catcher that lives on syllables,  
Ev'n such small critics some regard may claim,  
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakspeare's name.  
Pretty ! in amber to observe the forms  
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms ! 170  
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,  
But wonder how the devil they got there.

Were others angry : I excused them too ;  
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.  
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find ; 175  
But each man's secret standard in his mind,  
That casting-weight Pride adds to emptiness,  
This, who can gratify ? for who can guess ?  
The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,  
Who turns a Persian tale for half-a-crown,<sup>o</sup> 180  
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a year ;  
He who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,

- Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left;  
185 And he who now to sense, now nonsense, leaning,  
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:  
And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad,  
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:  
All these my modest satire bade translate,  
190 And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.<sup>o</sup>  
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!  
And swear not ADDISON himself was safe.  
°Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires  
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,  
195 Bless'd with each talent and each art to please,  
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;  
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,  
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne;  
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,  
200 And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;  
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;  
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,  
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;  
225 Alike reserv'd to blame or to commend,  
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;  
Dreading ev'n fools; by flatterers besieged,  
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;  
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,  
210 And sit attentive to his own applause:  
While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,  
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —  
Who but must laugh if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?  
215 What tho' my name stood rubric on the walls,



Or plaster'd posts, with claps, in capitals?  
 Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,  
 On wings of winds came flying all abroad?  
 I sought no homage from the race that write;  
 I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight: 220  
 Poems I heeded (now berhymed so long)  
 No more than thou, great George! a birthday song.  
 I ne'er with Wits or Witlings pass'd my days  
 To spread about the itch of verse and praise;  
 Nor like a puppy daggled thro' the town 225  
 To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;  
 Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cried,  
 With handkerchief and orange at my side;  
 But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,  
 To Bufo<sup>o</sup> left the whole Castalian state. 230  
 Proud as Apollo on his forked hill  
 Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill:  
 Fed with soft dedication all day long,  
 Horace and he went hand in hand in song.  
 His library (where busts of poets dead, 235  
 And a true Pindar stood without a head<sup>o</sup>)  
 Receiv'd of Wits an undistinguish'd race,  
 Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:  
 Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,  
 And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat: 240  
 Till grown more frugal in his riper days,  
 He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;  
 To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,  
 And others (harder still) he paid in kind.  
 Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh; 245  
 Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:  
 But still the great have kindness in reserve;

He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.<sup>o</sup>  
May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill !  
250 May every Bavius have his Bufo still !  
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,  
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,  
Or simple Pride for flatt'ry makes demands,  
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands !  
255 Bless'd be the great ! for those they take away,  
And those they left me — for they left me Gay<sup>o</sup>;  
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,  
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb :  
Of all thy blameless life the sole return  
260 My Verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er thy urn !  
Oh let me live my own, and die so too  
(To live and die is all I have to do) !  
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,  
And see what friends, and read what books I please ;  
265 Above a Patron, tho' I condescend  
Sometimes to call a minister my Friend.  
I was not born for courts of great affairs ;  
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers ;  
Can sleep without a poem in my head,  
270 Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.  
Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light ?  
Heav'ns ! was I born for nothing but to write ?  
Has life no joys for me ? or (to be grave)  
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save ?  
275 'I found him close with Swift' — 'Indeed ? no doubt  
(Cries prating Balbus) something will come out.'  
'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will ;  
'No, such a genius never can lie still :'  
And then for mine obliging mistakes

The first lampoon Sir Will<sup>o</sup> or Bubo makes. 280  
 Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,  
 When ev'ry coxcomb knows me by my style?

Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,  
 That tends to make one worthy man my foe,  
 Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear, 285  
 Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear!

But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,  
 Insults fall'n Worth, or Beauty in distress,  
 Who loves a lie, lame Slander helps about,  
 Who writes a libel, or who copies out; 290

That fop whose pride affects a patron's name,  
 Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;  
 Who can your merit selfishly approve,  
 And show the sense of it without the love;  
 Who has the vanity to call you friend, 295  
 Yet wants the honour, injured, to defend;

Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,  
 And, if he lie not, must at least betray;  
 Who to the Dean and Silver Bell<sup>o</sup> can swear,  
 And sees at Canons what was never there; 300  
 Who reads but with a lust to misapply,  
 Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie:

A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,  
 But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.

Let Sporus<sup>o</sup> tremble — A. What? that thing of silk, 305  
 Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?  
 Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?  
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,  
 This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings; 310  
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,

Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er enjoys;  
 So well-bred spaniels civilly delight  
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.  
 315 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,  
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way,  
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,  
 And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,  
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,  
 320 Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,  
 In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,  
 Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;  
 His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,  
 Now high, now low, now master up, now miss, }  
 325 And he himself one vile Antithesis. }  
 Amphibious thing! that acting either part,  
 The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;  
 Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,  
 Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.  
 330 Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,  
 A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;  
 Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will trust,  
 Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the dust.  
 Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's fool,  
 335 Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,  
 Not proud nor servile; — be one poet's praise,  
 That if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways:  
 That flatt'ry ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,  
 And thought a lie in verse or prose the same;  
 340 That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,  
 But stoop'd to truth, and moralized his song;  
 That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,  
 He stood° the furious foe, the timid friend,

The damning critic, half approving wit,  
 The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit; 345  
 Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,  
 The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;  
 The distant threats of vengeance on his head,  
 The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;  
 The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,<sup>o</sup> 350  
 Th' imputed trash and dulness not his own<sup>o</sup>;  
 The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,  
 The libell'd person, and the pictured shape<sup>o</sup>;  
 Abuse on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,  
 A friend in exile,<sup>o</sup> or a father dead<sup>o</sup>; 355  
 The whisper, that, to greatness still too near,  
 Perhaps yet vibrates on his SOV'REIGN'S ear —  
 Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:  
 For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!

A. But why insult the poor? affront the great? 360

P. A knave's a knave to me in ev'ry state;  
 Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,  
 Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail;  
 A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,  
 Knight of the post<sup>o</sup> corrupt, or of the shire; 365  
 If on a Pillory, or near a Throne,  
 He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,  
 Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:  
 This dreaded Satirist Dennis will confess 370  
 Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress<sup>o</sup>:  
 So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,<sup>o</sup>  
 Has drunk with Cibber, nay, has rhymed for Moore.<sup>o</sup>  
 Full ten years<sup>o</sup> slander'd, did he once reply?  
 Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's<sup>o</sup> lie. 375

To please a mistress one aspers'd his life;  
 He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:  
 Let Budgell<sup>o</sup> charge low Grub-street on his quill,  
 And write whate'er he pleased, except his will;  
 380 Let the two Curlls of town and court abuse  
 His father, mother, body, soul, and muse:  
 Yet why? that father held it for a rule,  
 It was a sin to call our neighbour fool;  
 That harmless mother thought no wife a whore:  
 385 Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!  
 Unspotted names, and memorable long,  
 If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.  
 Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's cause,  
 While yet in Britain honour had applause)  
 390 Each parent sprung — A. What fortune, pray? —  
     *P.*                      Their own;  
 And better got than Bestia's<sup>o</sup> from the throne.  
 Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,  
 Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,<sup>o</sup>  
 Stranger to civil and religious rage,  
 395 The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.  
 No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,  
 Nor dared an oath,<sup>o</sup> nor hazarded a lie.  
 Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,  
 No language but the language of the heart.  
 400 By Nature honest, by Experience wise,  
 Healthy by Temp'rance and by Exercise;  
 His life, tho' long, to sickness pass'd unknown,  
 His death was instant and without a groan.  
 O grant me thus to live, and thus to die!  
 405 Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.  
     O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!

Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:  
Me, let the tender office long engage  
To rock the cradle of reposing Age,  
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath, 410  
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed of Death;  
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,  
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!  
On cares like these if length of days attend,  
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend! 415  
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,  
And just as rich as when he serv'd a Queen.°

A. Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,  
Thus far was right; — the rest belongs to Heav'n.

# AN ADDRESS TO DULNESS FROM THE DUNCIAD °

## BOOK IV

Now crowds on crowds around the Goddess press,  
Each eager to present the first address.  
Dunce scorning Dunce beholds the next advance,  
But Fop shows Fop superior complaisance.  
5 When lo! a spectre rose, whose index hand  
Held forth the virtue of the dreadful wand;  
His beaver'd brow a birchen garland wears,  
Dropping with infants' blood and mothers' tears.  
O'er ev'ry vein a shudd'ring horror runs,  
10 Eton and Winton° shake thro' all their sons.  
All flesh is humbled, Westminster's bold race  
Shrink, and confess the Genius of the place:  
The pale boy-senator yet tingling stands,  
And holds his breeches close with both his hands.  
15 Then thus: 'Since man from beast by words is known,  
Words are man's province, words we teach alone.  
When reason doubtful, like the Samian letter,°  
Points him two ways, the narrower is the better.  
Placed at the door of learning, youth to guide,°  
20 We never suffer it to stand too wide.  
To ask, to guess, to know, as they commence,



As Fancy opens the quick springs of Sense,  
We ply the Memory, we load the Brain,  
Bind rebel wit, and double chain on chain,  
Confine the thought, to exercise the breath, 25  
And keep them in the pale of words till death.  
Whate'er the talents, or howe'er design'd,  
We hang one jingling padlock on the mind:  
A poet the first day he dips his quill;  
And what the last? a very poet still, 30  
Pity! the charm works only in our wall,  
Lost, lost too soon in yonder house or hall.<sup>o</sup>  
There truant Wyndham<sup>o</sup> ev'ry Muse gave o'er,  
There Talbot<sup>o</sup> sunk, and was a Wit no more!  
How sweet an Ovid, Murray was our boast! 35  
How many Martials were in Pultney lost!  
Else sure some bard, to our eternal praise,  
In twice ten thousand rhyming nights and days,  
Had reach'd the work, the all that mortal can,  
And South beheld that masterpiece of man.<sup>o</sup> 40  
'O (cried the Goddess) for some pedant reign!  
Some gentle James,<sup>o</sup> to bless the land again:  
To stick the doctor's chair into the throne,  
Give law to words, or war with words alone,  
Senates and Courts with Greek and Latin rule, 45  
And turn the Council to a grammar school!  
For sure if Dulness sees a grateful day,  
'Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.  
O! if my sons may learn one earthly thing,  
Teach but that one, sufficient for a King; 50  
That which my priests, and mine alone, maintain,  
Which, as it dies, or lives, we fall, or reign:  
May you, may Cam, and Isis, preach it long!

“The right divine of Kings to govern wrong.”

- 55 Prompt at the call, around the Goddess roll  
 Broad hats, and hoods, and caps, a sable shoal:  
 Thick and more thick the black blockade extends,  
 A hundred head of Aristotle's friends.  
 Nor wert thou, Isis! wanting to the day  
 60 (Tho' Christ Church long kept prudishly away):  
 Each stanch polemic, stubborn as a rock,  
 Each fierce logician, still expelling Locke,  
 Came whip and spur, and dash'd thro' thin and thick,  
 On German Crousaz,<sup>o</sup> and Dutch Burgersdyck.<sup>o</sup>  
 65 As many quit the streams<sup>o</sup> that murm'ring fall  
 To lull the sons of Marg'ret and Clare Hall,  
 Where Bentley<sup>o</sup> late tempestuous wont to sport  
 In troubled waters, but now sleeps in port.  
 Before them march'd that awful Aristarch;  
 70 Plough'd was his front with many a deep remark;  
 His hat, which never veil'd to human pride,  
 Walker<sup>o</sup> with rev'rence took, and laid aside.  
 Low bow'd the rest; he, kingly, did but nod;  
 So upright Quakers please both man and God.  
 75 'Mistress! dismiss that rabble from your throne;  
 Avaunt — is Aristarchus<sup>o</sup> yet unknown?  
 Thy mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains  
 Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.<sup>o</sup>  
 Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,  
 80 Critics like me shall make it prose again.  
 Roman and Greek grammarians! know your better;  
 Author of something yet more great than letter;  
 While tow'ring o'er your alphabet, like Saul,  
 Stands our Digamma,<sup>o</sup> and o'ertops them all.  
 85 'Tis true, on words is still our whole debate,

Disputes of *me* or *te*,<sup>o</sup> of *aut* or *at*,  
 To sound or sink in *cano*, O or A,  
 Or give up Cicero to C or K.<sup>o</sup>  
 Let Friend<sup>o</sup> affect to speak as Terence spoke,  
 And Alsop<sup>o</sup> never but like Horace joke: 90  
 For me what Virgil, Pliny, may deny,  
 Manilius<sup>o</sup> or Solinus shall supply:  
 For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek,  
 I poach in Suidas<sup>o</sup> for unlicens'd Greek.  
 In ancient sense if any needs will deal, 95  
 Be sure I give them fragments, not a meal;  
 What Gellius<sup>o</sup> or Stobæus<sup>o</sup> hash'd before,  
 Or chew'd by blind old scholiasts o'er and o'er.  
 The critic eye, that microscope of wit,  
 Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit. 100  
 How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,  
 The Body's harmony, the beaming Soul,  
 Are things which Kuster,<sup>o</sup> Burman,<sup>o</sup> Wasse<sup>o</sup> shall see;  
 When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea.  
 'Ah, think not, Mistress! more true dulness lies 105  
 In Folly's cap, than Wisdom's grave disguise.  
 Like buoys, that never sink into the flood,  
 On learning's surface we but lie and nod.  
 Thine is the genuine head of many a house,  
 And much divinity without a *voûs*. 110  
 Nor could a Barrow<sup>o</sup> work on ev'ry block,  
 Nor has one Atterbury<sup>o</sup> spoil'd the flock!  
 See! still thy own, the heavy Canon roll,  
 And metaphysic smokes involve the pole.  
 For thee we dim the eyes, and stuff the head 115  
 With all such reading as was never read:  
 For thee explain a thing till all men doubt it,

And write about it, Goddess, and about it:  
 So spins the silkworm small its slender store,  
 120 And labours till it clouds itself all o'er.  
 'What tho' we let some better sort of fool  
 Thrid ev'ry science, run thro' ev'ry school?  
 Never by tumbler thro' the hoops was shown  
 Such skill in passing all, and touching none.  
 125 He may indeed (if sober all this time)  
 Plague with Dispute, or persecute with Rhyme.  
 We only furnish what he cannot use,  
 Or, wed to what he must divorce, a Muse:  
 Full in the midst of Euclid dip at once,  
 130 And petrify a Genius to a Dunce:  
 Or, set on metaphysic ground to prance,  
 Show all his paces, not a step advance.  
 With the same cement, ever sure to bind,  
 We bring to one dead level ev'ry mind:  
 135 Then take him to develop, if you can,  
 And hew the Block off, and get out the Man.<sup>o'</sup>

## THE TRIUMPH OF DULNESS

### THE CONCLUDING LINES OF THE DUNCIAD

In vain, in vain — the all-composing hour  
 Resistless falls; the Muse obeys the power.  
 She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold  
 Of Night primeval, and of Chaos old!  
 5 Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,  
 And all its varying rainbows die away.  
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,

The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.  
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,  
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain; 10  
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand opprest,  
Closed one by one to everlasting rest;  
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,  
Art after Art goes out, and all is night.  
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled, 15  
Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head!  
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heaven before,  
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.  
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,  
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense! 20  
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!  
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.  
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,<sup>o</sup>  
And unawares Morality expires.  
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine; 25  
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!  
Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restor'd;  
Light dies before thy uncreating word:  
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;  
And universal Darkness buries all. 30

# ODE FOR MUSIC ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY°

(1708-1730)

## I

DESCEND, ye Nine,° descend and sing:  
The breathing instruments inspire,  
Wake into voice each silent string,  
And sweep the sounding lyre.

5        In a sadly pleasing strain  
      Let the warbling lute complain;  
          Let the loud trumpet sound,  
          Till the roofs all around  
          The shrill echoes rebound;  
10      While in more lengthen'd notes and slow  
      The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.  
          Hark! the numbers soft and clear  
          Gently steal upon the ear;  
          Now louder, and yet louder rise,  
15      And fill with spreading sounds the skies:  
      Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,  
      In broken air, trembling, the wild music floats:  
          Till by degrees, remote and small,  
          The strains decay,  
20      And melt away,  
          In a dying, dying fall.

II

By Music minds an equal temper know,  
 Nor swell too high, nor sink too low.  
 If in the breast tumultuous joys arise,  
 Music her soft assuasive voice applies: 25  
 Or when the soul is press'd with cares,  
 Exalts her in enlivening airs.  
 Warriors she fires with animated sounds,  
 Pours balm into the bleeding lover's wounds;  
 Melancholy lifts her head, 30  
 Morpheus rouses from his bed,  
 Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,  
 List'ning Envy drops her snakes;  
 Intestine war no more our passions wage,  
 And giddy Factions hear away their rage.° 35

III

But when our country's cause provokes to arms,  
 How martial music ev'ry bosom warms!  
 So when the first bold-vessel° dared the seas,  
 High on the stern the Thracian° rais'd his strain,  
 While Argo saw her kindred trees 40  
 Descend from Pelion to the main:  
 Transported demigods stood round,°  
 And men grew heroes at the sound,  
 Inflamed with Glory's charms:  
 Each chief his sev'nfold shield display'd, 45  
 And half unsheath'd the shining blade;  
 And seas, and rocks, and skies rebound  
 To arms, to arms, to arms!

## IV

But when thro' all th' infernal bounds,  
 50 Which flaming Phlegethon<sup>o</sup> surrounds,  
 Love, strong as Death, the Poet<sup>o</sup> led  
 To the pale nations of the dead,  
 What sounds were heard,  
 What scenes appear'd,  
 55 O'er all the dreamy coasts!  
 Dreadful gleams,  
 Dismal screams,  
 Fires that glow,  
 Shrieks of woe,  
 60 Sullen moans,  
 Hollow groans,  
 And cries of tortured ghosts!  
 But hark! he strikes the golden lyre,  
 And see! the tortured ghosts respire!  
 65 See, shady forms advance!  
 Thy stone, O Sisyphus,<sup>o</sup> stands still,  
 Ixion rests upon his wheel,<sup>o</sup>  
 And the pale spectres dance;  
 The Furies sink upon their iron beds,  
 70 And snakes uncurl'd hang list'ning round their heads.

## V

By the streams that ever flow,  
 By the fragrant winds that blow  
 O'er th' Elysian flowers;  
 By those happy souls who dwell  
 75 In yellow meads of Asphodel,  
 Or Amaranthine bowers;



By the heroes' armed shades,  
 Glitt'ring thro' the gloomy glades;  
 By the youths that died for love,  
 Wand'ring in the myrtle grove,<sup>o</sup> 80  
 Restore, restore Eurydice to life<sup>o</sup>!  
 Oh, take the husband, or return the wife!  
 He sung, and Hell consented  
 To hear the Poet's prayer:  
 Stern Proserpine relented,<sup>o</sup> 85  
 And gave him back the Fair.  
 Thus song could prevail  
 O'er Death and o'er Hell,  
 A conquest how hard and how glorious!  
 Tho' fate had fast bound her, 90  
 With Styx<sup>o</sup> nine times round her,  
 Yet music and love were victorious.

VI

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes:  
 Again she falls, again she dies, she dies!  
 How wilt thou now the fatal sisters<sup>o</sup> move? 95  
 No crime was thine, if 'tis no crime to love.  
 Now under hanging mountains,  
 Beside the falls of fountains,  
 Or where Hebrus<sup>o</sup> wanders,  
 Rolling in meanders, 100  
 All alone,  
 Unheard, unknown,  
 He makes his moan;  
 And calls her ghost,  
 For ever, ever, ever lost! 105

Now with Furies<sup>o</sup> surrounded,  
 Despairing, confounded,  
 He trembles, he glows,  
 Amidst Rhodope's snows.

110 See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies!  
 Hark! Hæmus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries<sup>o</sup> —  
 Ah see, he dies!

Yet ev'n in death Eurydice he sung,  
 Eurydice still trembled on his tongue;

115 Eurydice the woods,  
 Eurydice the floods,  
 Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains rung.

## VII

Music the fiercest grief can charm,  
 And Fate's severest rage disarm:  
 120 Music can soften pain to ease,  
 And make despair and madness please:  
 Our joys below it can improve,  
 And antedate the bliss above.

This the divine Cecilia found,  
 125 And to her Maker's praise confin'd the sound.  
 When the full organ joins the tuneful quire,  
 Th' immortal Powers incline their ear;  
 Borne on the swelling notes our souls aspire,  
 While solemn airs improve the sacred fire,  
 130 And Angels lean from Heav'n to hear.  
 Of Orpheus now no more let poets tell;  
 To bright Cecilia greater power is giv'n:  
 His numbers rais'd a shade from Hell,  
 Hers lift the soul to Heav'n.<sup>o</sup>

ON SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL<sup>o</sup>

A PLEASING Form, a firm, yet cautious Mind;  
 Sincere, tho' prudent; constant, yet resign'd:  
 Honour unchanged, a Principle profest,  
 Fix'd to one side, but mod'rate to the rest:  
 An honest Courtier, yet a Patriot too, 5  
 Just to his Prince, and to his Country true:  
 Fill'd with the Sense of age, the Fire of youth,  
 A scorn of Wrangling, yet a zeal for Truth;  
 A gen'rous Faith, from superstition free,  
 A love to Peace, and hate of Tyranny; 10  
 Such this Man was, who now, from earth remov'd,  
 At length enjoys that Liberty he lov'd.

## TO MR. GAY

WHO HAD CONGRATULATED POPE ON FINISHING  
HIS HOUSE AND GARDENS

(Written early in 1722)

AH, friend! 'tis true — this truth you lovers know —  
 In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,  
 In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes  
 Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens;  
 Joy lives not here, to happier seats it flies, 5  
 And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

What are the gay Parterre, the chequer'd Shade,  
 The morning Bower, the ev'ning Colonnade,  
 But soft recesses of uneasy minds,  
 To sigh unheard in to the passing winds? 10

So the struck deer in some sequester'd part  
 Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;  
 He stretch'd unseen in coverts hid from day,  
 Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away.

## ON MR. GAY

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, 1730

OF Manners gentle, of Affections mild;  
 In Wit a man; Simplicity a child:  
 With native Humour temp'ring virtuous Rage,  
 Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:  
 5 Above temptation, in a low estate,  
 And uncorrupted ev'n among the Great:  
 A safe Companion, and an easy Friend,  
 Unblamed thro' life, lamented in thy End.  
 These are thy Honours! not that here thy bust  
 10 Is mix'd with Heroes, or with Kings thy dust:  
 But that the Worthy and the Good shall say,  
 Striking their pensive bosoms — 'Here lies GAY!'

ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFOR-  
TUNATE LADY°

WHAT beck'ning ghost along the moonlight shade  
 Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?  
 'Tis she! — but why that bleeding bosom gor'd?  
 Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?

Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly ! tell, 5  
Is it, in Heav'n, a crime to love too well ?  
To bear too tender or too firm a heart,  
To act a lover's or a Roman's part ?  
Is there no bright réversion in the sky  
For those who greatly think, or bravely die ? 10  
Why bade ye else, ye Powers ! her soul aspire  
Above the vulgar flight of low desire ?  
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes,  
The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods :  
Thence to their images on earth it flows, 15  
And in the breasts of Kings and Heroes glows.  
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,  
Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage ;  
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years  
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres ; 20  
Like eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,  
And, close confin'd to their own palace, sleep.

From these, perhaps (ere Nature bade her die),  
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky.  
As into air the purer spirits flow, 25  
And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below ;  
So flew the soul to its congenial place,  
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,  
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood ! 30  
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,  
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death ;  
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,  
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.  
Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball, 35  
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall ;

On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,  
And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates;  
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say  
40 (While the long funerals blacken all the way),  
Lo! these were they whose souls the furies steel'd,  
And cursed with hearts unknowing how to yield.  
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,  
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!  
45 So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow  
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.

What can atone, O ever injured shade!  
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?  
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear  
50 Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier;  
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,  
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,  
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,  
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd.  
55 What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,  
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,  
And bear about the mockery of woe  
To midnight dances, and the public show?  
What tho' no weeping loves thy ashes grace,  
60 Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?  
What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,  
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?  
Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dress'd,  
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:  
65 There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,  
There the first roses of the year shall blow;  
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
The ground, now sacred by thy relics made.

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,  
What once had Beauty, Titles, Wealth and Fame. 70  
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,  
To whom related, or by whom begot;  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;  
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!

Poets themselves must fall like those they sung, 75  
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.  
Ev'n he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,  
Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;  
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,  
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart; 80  
Life's idle bus'ness at one gasp be o'er,  
The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

## ELOISA TO ABELARD°

(1718)

IN these deep solitudes and awful cells,  
Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,  
And ever-musing Melancholy reigns,  
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?  
5 Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?  
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?  
Yet, yet I love! — From Abelard it came,  
And Eloisa yet must kiss the name.

Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,  
10 Nor pass these lips, in holy silence seal'd:  
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,  
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:  
O write it not, my hand — the name appears  
Already written — wash it out, my tears!

15 In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,  
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.

Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains  
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:  
Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have worn;  
20 Ye grotts and caverns shagg'd with horrid thorn!  
Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,  
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!  
Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,  
I have not yet forgot myself to stone.

25 All is not Heav'n's while Abelard has part,  
Still rebel Nature holds out half my heart;



Nor prayers nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,  
Nor tears, for ages taught to flow in vain.

Soon as thy letters trembling I uncloze,  
That well-known name awakens all my woes. 30  
Oh name for ever sad ! for ever dear !

Still breathed in sighs, still usher'd with a tear.  
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,  
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.  
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow, 35  
Led thro' a safe variety of woe :

Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,  
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom !  
There stern religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,  
There died the best of passions, Love and Fame. 40

Yet write, O write me all, that I may join  
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.  
Nor foes nor fortune take this power away ;  
And is my Abelard less kind than they ?  
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare ; 45  
Love but demands what else were shed in prayer.  
No happier task these faded eyes pursue ;  
To read and weep is all they now can do.

Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief ;  
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief. 50  
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,  
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid ;  
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,  
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires ;  
The virgin's wish without her fears impart, 55  
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,  
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,  
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.

Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,  
60 When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name;  
My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,  
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.  
Those smiling eyes, attemp'ring every ray,  
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day,  
65 Guiltless I gazed; Heav'n listen'd while you sung;  
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.  
From lips like those what precept fail'd to move?  
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love:  
Back thro' the paths of pleasing sense I ran,  
70 Nor wish'd an angel whom I loved a man.  
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see;  
Nor envy them that Heav'n I lose for thee.

How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,  
Curse on all laws but those which Love has made!  
75 Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,  
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.  
Let Wealth, let Honour, wait the wedded dame,  
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;  
Before true passion all those views remove;  
80 Fame, Wealth, and Honour! what are you to Love?  
The jealous God, when we profane his fires,  
Those restless passions in revenge inspires,  
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,  
Who seek in love for aught but love alone.  
85 Should at my feet the world's great master fall,  
Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all:  
Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;  
No, make me mistress to the man I love;  
If there be yet another name more free,  
90 More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!

O happy state! when souls each other draw,  
When Love is liberty, and Nature law:  
All then is full, possessing and possess'd,  
No craving void left aching in the breast:  
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part, 95  
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.  
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be),  
And once the lot of Abelard and me.

Alas, how changed! what sudden horrors rise!  
A naked lover bound and bleeding lies! 100  
Where, where was Eloise? her voice, her hand,  
Her poniard had opposed the dire command.  
Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;  
The crime was common, common be the pain.  
I can no more; by shame, by rage suppress'd, 105  
Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.

Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,  
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?  
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,  
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell? 110  
As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,  
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:  
Heav'n scarce believ'd the conquest it survey'd,  
And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.  
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew, 115  
Not on the cross my eyes were fix'd, but you:  
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,  
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.  
Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;  
Those still at least are left thee to bestow. 120  
Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,  
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,

Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd;  
Give all thou canst — and let me dream the rest.

125 Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize,  
With other beauties charm my partial eyes!  
Full in my view set all the bright abode,  
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.

Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,  
130 Plants of thy hand, and children of thy prayer.  
From the false world in early youth they fled,  
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.  
You raised these hallow'd walls°; the desert smil'd,  
And Paradise was open'd in the wild.

135 No weeping orphan saw his father's stores  
Our shrines irradiate or emblaze the floors;  
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,  
Here bribed the rage of ill-requited Heav'n;  
But such plain roofs as piety could raise,  
140 And only vocal with the Maker's praise.  
In these lone walls (their day's eternal bound),  
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,  
Where awful arches make a noonday night,  
And the dim windows shed a solemn light,

145 Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray,  
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.  
But now no face divine contentment wears,  
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.

See how the force of others' prayers I try,  
150 (O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)  
But why should I on others' prayers depend?  
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!  
Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter, move,  
And all those tender names in one, thy love!

The darksome pines, that o'er yon rocks reclin'd, 155  
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,  
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,  
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,  
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,  
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze — 160  
No more these scenes my meditation aid,  
Or lull to rest the visionary maid:  
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,  
Long-sounding aisles and intermingled graves,  
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws 165  
A death-like silence, and a dread repose:  
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,  
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,  
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,  
And breathes a browner horror on the woods. 170  
Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;  
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!  
Death, only Death can break the lasting chain;  
And here, ev'n then shall my cold dust remain;  
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign, 175  
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.  
Ah, wretch! believ'd the spouse of God in vain,  
Confess'd within the slave of Love and man.  
Assist me, Heav'n! but whence arose that prayer?  
Sprung it from piety or from despair? 180  
Ev'n here, where frozen Chastity retires,  
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.  
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;  
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;  
I view my crime, but kindle at the view, 185  
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;

Now turn'd to Heav'n, I weep my past offence,  
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.  
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,  
190 'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!  
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,  
And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?  
How the dear object from the crime remove,  
Or how distinguish Penitence from Love?  
195 Unequal task! a passion to resign,  
For hearts so touch'd, so pierced, so lost as mine:  
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,  
How often must it love, how often hate!  
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,  
200 Conceal, disdain — do all things but forget!  
But let Heav'n seize it, all at once 'tis fired;  
Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspired!  
O come! O teach me Nature to subdue,  
Renounce my love, my life, myself — and You:  
205 Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he  
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.  
How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!  
The world forgetting, by the world forgot;  
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,  
210 Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;  
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;  
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep°;  
Desires composed, affections ever ev'n;  
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to Heav'n.  
215 Grace shines around her with serenest beams,  
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.  
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,  
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;

For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;  
For her white virgins hymeneals sing; 220  
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,  
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,  
Far other raptures of unholy joy.  
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day, 225  
Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,  
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving Nature free,  
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee!  
Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!  
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight! 230  
Provoking demons all restraint remove,  
And stir within me every source of love.

I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,  
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.  
I wake: — no more I hear, no more I view, 235  
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.  
I call aloud; it hears not what I say:  
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.

To dream once more I close my willing eyes;  
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise! 240

Alas, no more! methinks we wand'ring go  
Thro' dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,  
Where round some mould'ring tower pale ivy creeps,  
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.  
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies; 245  
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.

I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,  
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.

For thee the Fates, severely kind, ordain  
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain; 250

Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose;  
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.  
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,  
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;  
255 Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,  
And mild as opening gleams of promised Heav'n.  
Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?  
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.  
Nature stands check'd; Religion disapproves;  
260 Ev'n thou art cold — yet Eloisa loves.  
Ah, hopeless, lasting flames; like those that burn  
To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful urn!  
What scenes appear where'er I turn my view;  
The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue;  
265 Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,  
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.  
I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,  
Thy image steals between my God and me:  
Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,  
270 With every bead I drop too soft a tear.  
When from the censor clouds of fragrance roll,  
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,  
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,  
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:  
275 In seas of flame my plunging soul is drown'd,  
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.  
While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,  
Kind virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,  
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,  
280 And dawning grace is opening on my soul:  
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!  
Oppose thyself to Heav'n; dispute my heart;



Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes  
Blot out each bright idea of the skies;  
Take back that grace, those sorrows and those tears, 285  
Take back my fruitless penitence and prayers;  
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode:  
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!  
No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;  
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll! 290  
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,  
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.  
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;  
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.  
Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I view), 295  
Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, all adieu!  
O Grace serene! O Virtue heav'nly fair!  
Divine Oblivion of low-thoughted care!  
Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the sky!  
And Faith, our early immortality! 300  
Enter each mild, each amicable guest;  
Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!  
See in her cell sad Eloisa spread,  
Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead.  
In each low wind methinks a spirit calls, 305  
And more than echoes talk along the walls.  
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,  
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound:  
'Come, sister, come! (it said, or seem'd to say)  
Thy place is here, sad sister, come away; 310  
Once, like thyself, I trembled, wept, and pray'd,  
Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted maid:  
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;  
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep;

315 Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:

For God, not man, absolves our frailties here.'

I come, I come! prepare your roseate bowers,  
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.

Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,

320 Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow;

Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,

And smooth my passage to the realms of day:

See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll,

Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!

325 Ah, no — in sacred vestments mayst thou stand,

The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,

Present the cross before my lifted eye,

Teach me at once, and learn of me, to die.

Ah then, thy once lov'd Eloisa see!

330 It will be then no crime to gaze on me.

See from my cheek the transient roses fly!

See the last sparkle languish in my eye!

Till ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,

And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.

335 O Death, all-eloquent! you only prove

What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we love.

Then too, when Fate shall thy fair frame destroy

(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy),

In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drown'd,

340 Bright clouds descend, and angels watch thee round;

From opening skies may streaming glories shine,

And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.

May one kind grave unite each hapless name,<sup>o</sup>

And graft my love immortal on thy fame!

345 Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,

When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;

If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings,  
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,  
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,  
And drink the falling tears each other sheds; 350  
Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,  
'O may we never love as these have lov'd!'  
From the full choir, when loud hosannas rise,  
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,  
Amid that scene if some relenting eye 355  
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,  
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from Heav'n,  
One human tear shall drop, and be forgiv'n.  
And sure if Fate some future bard shall join  
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,° 360  
Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,  
And image charms he must behold no more, —  
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well,  
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;  
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost; 365  
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

## MESSIAH

YE Nymphs of Solyma ! begin the song :  
To heav'nly themes sublimer strains belong.  
The mossy fountains, and the sylvan shades,  
The dreams of Pindus, and th' Aonian maids,  
5 Delight no more — O Thou my voice inspire  
Who touch'd Isaiah's hallow'd lips with fire !  
Rapt into future times, the bard begun :  
A virgin shall conceive, a virgin bear a son !<sup>1</sup>  
From Jesse's<sup>2</sup> root behold a branch arise,  
10 Whose sacred flower with fragrance fills the skies ;  
Th' ethereal spirit o'er its leaves shall move,  
And on its top descends the mystic dove.  
Ye Heav'ns !<sup>3</sup> from high the dewy nectar pour,  
And in soft silence shed the kindly shower !  
15 The sick<sup>4</sup> and weak the healing plant shall aid,  
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade.  
All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail,  
Returning Justice<sup>5</sup> lift aloft her scale ;  
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,  
20 And white-robed Innocence from Heav'n descend.  
Swift fly the years, and rise th' expected morn !  
O spring to light, auspicious babe ! be born.  
See Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,<sup>6</sup>

## IMITATIONS

<sup>1</sup> Virg. Ecl. iv. ver. 6.

‘ Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna ;  
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.  
Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,  
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras. . . .  
Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.’

‘ Now the virgin returns, now the kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven. By means of thee, whatever relics of our crimes remain, shall be wiped away, and free the world from perpetual fears. He shall govern the earth in peace, with the virtues of his father.’

Isaiah, ch. vii. ver. 14. ‘ Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.’ Ch. ix. ver. 6, 7. ‘ Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . the Prince of Peace : of the increase of his government, and of his peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.’

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah, ch. xi. ver. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. xlv. ver. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. xxv. ver. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. ix. ver. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Virg. Ecl. iv. ver. 18.

‘ At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,  
Errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus,  
Mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho —  
Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.’

With all the incense of the breathing spring:  
25 See lofty Lebanon <sup>7</sup> his head advance,  
See nodding forests on the mountains dance:  
See spicy clouds from lowly Saron rise,  
And Carmel's flow'ry top perfumes the skies!  
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers;<sup>8</sup>  
30 Prepare the way!<sup>9</sup> a God, a God appears!  
A God, a God! the vocal hills reply;  
The Rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.  
Lo, Earth receives him from the bending skies!  
Sink down, ye Mountains, and, ye valleys, rise;  
35 With heads declin'd, ye Cedars, homage pay;  
Be smooth, ye Rocks; ye rapid floods, give way;  
The Saviour comes, by ancient bards foretold!  
Hear him,<sup>10</sup> ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold!  
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,  
40 And on the sightless eyeball pour the day:  
'Tis he th' obstructed paths of sound shall clear,  
And bid new music charm th' unfolding ear:  
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,  
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.  
45 No sigh, no murmur, the wide world shall hear,  
From every face he wipes off every tear.  
In<sup>11</sup> adamant chains shall Death be bound,  
And Hell's grim tyrant feel th' eternal wound.  
As the good Shepherd<sup>12</sup> tends his fleecy care,  
50 Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,  
Explores the lost; the wand'ring sheep directs,  
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects;  
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,  
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;

‘For thee, O child, shall the earth, without being tilled, produce her early offerings; winding ivy, mixed with baccar, and colocasia with smiling acanthus. Thy cradle shall pour forth pleasing flowers about thee.’

Isaiah, ch. xxxv. ver. 1. ‘The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad . . . and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.’ Ch. lx. ver. 13. ‘The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together to beautify the place of my sanctuary.’

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah, ch. xxxv. ver. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Virg. Ecl. iv. ver. 48, Ecl. v. ver. 62.

‘Aggredere o magnos, aderit jam tempus, honores,  
Cara deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum !

Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant  
Intonsi montes, ipsæ jam carmina rupes,  
Ipsa sonant arbusta, Deus, deus ille, Menalca !’

‘O come and receive the mighty honours : the time draws nigh, O beloved offspring of the Gods, O great increase of Jove ! . . . The uncultivated mountains send shouts of joy to the stars, the very rocks sing in verse, the very shrubs cry out, A god, a God.’

Isaiah, ch. xl. ver. 3, 4. ‘The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.’ Ch. xlv. ver. 23. ‘Break forth into singing, ye mountains ! O forest, and every tree therein ! for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob.’

<sup>9</sup> Ch. xl. ver. 3, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah, ch. xlii. ver. 18; ch. xxxv. ver. 5, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ch. xxv. ver. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. xl. ver. 11.

- 55 Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage,  
The promis'd Father<sup>13</sup> of the future age.  
No more shall<sup>14</sup> nation against nation rise,  
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,  
Nor fields with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er,  
60 The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;  
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,  
And the broad falchion in a ploughshare end.  
Then palaces shall rise; the joyful<sup>15</sup> son  
Shall finish what his short-lived sire begun;  
65 Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,  
And the same hand that sow'd shall reap the field:  
The swain in barren<sup>16</sup> deserts with surprise  
See lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;<sup>17</sup>  
And start, amidst the thirsty wilds, to hear  
70 New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.  
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,  
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods;  
Waste<sup>18</sup> sandy valleys, once perplex'd with thorn,  
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn;  
75 To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,  
And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.  
The lambs<sup>19</sup> with wolves shall graze the verdant  
mead,  
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;<sup>20</sup>  
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,  
80 And harmless serpents<sup>21</sup> lick the pilgrim's feet;  
The smiling infant in his hand shall take  
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,  
Pleas'd, the green lustre of the scales survey,  
And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.



<sup>13</sup> Ch. ix. ver. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah, ch. ii. ver. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ch. lxv. ver. 21, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. xxxv. ver. 1, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Virg. Ecl. iv. ver. 28.

‘ Molli paulatim flavescent campus arista,  
Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,  
Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella.’

‘The fields shall grow yellow with ripened ears, and the red grape shall hang upon the wild brambles, and the hard oaks shall distil honey like dew.’

Isaiah, ch. xxxv. ver. 7. ‘The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.’  
Ch. lv. ver. 13. ‘Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.’

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah, ch. xli. ver. 19, and ch. lv. ver. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Ch. xi. ver. 6, 7, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Virg. Ecl. iv. ver. 21.

‘ Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta capellæ  
Ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones. . . .  
Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni  
Occidet.’ —

‘The goats shall bear to the fold their udders distended with milk: nor shall the herds be afraid of the greatest lions. The serpent shall die, and the herb that conceals poison shall die.’

Isaiah, ch. xi. ver. 6, etc. ‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. — And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.’

<sup>21</sup> Ch. lxv. ver. 25.

- 85 Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem,<sup>22</sup> rise!<sup>23</sup>  
Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!  
See a long race<sup>24</sup> thy spacious courts adorn;  
See future sons and daughters, yet unborn,  
In crowding ranks on every side arise,  
90 Demanding life, impatient for the skies!  
See barb'rous nations<sup>25</sup> at thy gates attend,  
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend!  
See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,  
And heap'd with products of Sabæan<sup>26</sup> springs;  
95 For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,  
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow;  
See Heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,  
And break upon thee in a flood of day!  
No more the rising sun<sup>27</sup> shall gild the morn,  
100 Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver horn;  
But lost, dissolv'd in thy superior rays,  
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze  
O'erflow thy courts: the light himself shall shine  
Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine!  
105 The seas<sup>28</sup> shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,  
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;  
But fix'd his word, his saving power remains; —  
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns!

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah, ch. lx. ver. 1.

<sup>23</sup> The thoughts of Isaiah, which compose the latter part of the poem, are wonderfully elevated, and much above those general exclamations of Virgil, which make the loftiest parts of his *Pollio*.

‘ *Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo*

— *toto surget gens aurea mundo !*

— *incipient magni procedere menses !*

*Aspice, venturo lætantur ut omnia sæclo !*’ etc.

The reader needs only to turn to the passages of Isaiah here cited.

<sup>24</sup> Ch. lx. ver. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ch. lx. ver. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ch. lx. ver. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Isaiah, ch. lx. ver. 19, 20.

<sup>28</sup> Ch. li. ver. 6, and ch. liv. ver. 10.

## ODE ON SOLITUDE° (1703?)

HAPPY the man whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air  
In his own ground.

5 Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
In winter fire.

10 Bless'd who can unconcern'dly find  
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,  
In health of body, peace of mind,  
Quiet by day;

15 Sound sleep by night: study and ease  
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;  
And innocence, which most does please,  
With meditation.

20 Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,  
Thus unlamented let me die;  
Steal from the world, and not a stone  
Tell where I lie.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS  
SOUL° (1702)

## I

VITAL spark of heav'nly flame,  
Quit, oh quit, this mortal frame!  
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,  
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying!  
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life!

5

## II

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,  
Sister Spirit, come away.  
What is this absorbs me quite,  
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,  
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?  
Tell me, my Soul! can this be death?

10

## III

The world recedes; it disappears;  
Heav'n opens on my eyes; my ears  
With sounds seraphic ring:  
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!  
O Grave! where is thy Victory?  
O Death! where is thy Sting?

15

## ON HIS GROTTO AT TWICKENHAM°

(1740)

THOU who shalt stop where Thames' translucent wave  
 Shines a broad mirror thro' the shadowy cave;  
 Where ling'ring drops from min'ral roofs distil,  
 And pointed crystals break the sparkling rill;  
 5 Unpolish'd gems no ray on pride bestow,  
 And latent metals innocently grow;  
 Approach. Great Nature studiously behold!  
 And eye the mine without a wish for gold.  
 Approach; but awful! lo! the Ægerian grot,  
 10 Where, nobly pensive, St. John° sate and thought;  
 Where British sighs from dying Wyndham° stole,  
 And the bright flame was shot thro' Marchmont's soul.  
 Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,  
 Who dare to love their country, and be poor.

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER°

DEO APT. MAX. (1638)

FATHER of all! in ev'ry age,  
 In ev'ry clime ador'd,  
 By saint, by savage, and by sage,  
 Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

5 Thou Great First Cause, least understood,  
 Who all my sense confin'd  
 To know but this, that thou art good,  
 And that myself am blind:

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,  
To see the good from ill; 10  
And binding Nature fast in Fate,  
Left free the human Will.

What Conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do;  
This teach me more than Hell to shun, 15  
That more than Heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives  
Let me not cast away;  
For God is paid when man receives;  
T' enjoy is to obey. 20

Yet not to earth's contracted span  
Thy goodness let me bound,  
Or think thee Lord alone of man,  
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak unknowing hand 25  
Presume thy bolts to throw,  
And deal damnation round the land  
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,  
Still in the right to stay; 30  
If I am wrong, O teach my heart  
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish Pride  
Or impious Discontent,  
35 At aught thy wisdom has denied,  
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see:  
That mercy I to others show,  
40 That mercy show to me.

Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,  
Since quicken'd by thy breath;  
O lead me, whereso'er I go,  
Thro' this day's life or death!

45 This day be bread and peace my lot:  
All else beneath the sun  
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,  
And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all Space,  
Whose altar earth, sea, skies,  
50 One chorus let all Being raise,  
All Nature's incense rise!



## WINDSOR FOREST°

(1713)

THY forest, Windsor! and thy green retreats,  
At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats,  
Invite my lays. Be present, Sylvan Maids!  
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.  
*Granville*° commands: your aid, O Muses, bring! 5  
What muse for *Granville* can refuse to sing?  
The groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long,  
Live in description, and look green in song:  
These, were my breast inspired with equal flame,  
Like them in Beauty, should be like in Fame. 10  
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,  
Here earth and water seem to strive again;  
Not chaos-like together crush'd and bruis'd,  
But, as the world, harmoniously confused:  
Where order in variety we see, 15  
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree.  
Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,  
And part admit, and part exclude the day;  
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address  
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress. 20  
There, interspers'd in lawns and opening glades,  
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.  
Here in full light the russet plains extend:  
There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend.

- 25 Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,  
And 'midst the desert fruitful trees arise,  
That crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,  
Like verdant isles, the sable waste adorn.  
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
- 30 The weeping amber or the balmy tree,  
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,  
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.  
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,  
Tho' Gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
- 35 Than what more humble mountains offer here,  
Where, in their blessings, all those Gods appear.  
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crown'd,  
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamell'd ground,  
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
- 40 And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;  
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,  
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.  
Not thus the land appear'd in ages past,  
A dreary desert, and a gloomy waste,
- 45 To savage beasts and savage laws<sup>o</sup> a prey,  
And Kings more furious and severe than they;  
Who claim'd the skies, dispeopled air and floods,  
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:  
Cities laid waste, they storm'd the dens and caves
- 50 (For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves);  
What could be free, when lawless beasts obey'd,  
And ev'n the elements a Tyrant sway'd?  
In vain kind seasons swell'd the teeming grain,  
Soft showers distill'd, and suns grew warm in vain:
- 55 The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,  
And famish'd dies amidst his ripen'd fields.

What wonder then, a beast or subject slain  
Were equal crimes in a despotic reign?  
Both doom'd alike, for sportive tyrants bled,  
But while the subject starv'd, the beast was fed. 60  
Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,  
A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:  
Our haughty Norman boasts that barb'rous name,  
And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.  
The fields are ravish'd<sup>o</sup> from th' industrious swains, 65  
From men their cities, and from Gods their fanes;  
The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er;  
The hollow winds thro' naked temples roar;  
Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd;  
O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind; 70  
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,  
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.  
Aw'd by his nobles, by his commons curst,  
Th' Oppressor ruled tyrannic where he durst,  
Stretch'd o'er the poor and church his iron rod, 75  
And serv'd alike his vassals and his God.  
Whom ev'n the Saxon spar'd, and bloody Dane,  
The wanton victims of his sport remain.  
But see, the man who spacious regions gave  
A waste for beasts, himself denied a grave<sup>o</sup>! 80  
Stretch'd on the lawn his second hope<sup>o</sup> survey,  
At once the chaser, and at once the prey!  
Lo Rufus,<sup>o</sup> tugging at the deadly dart,  
Bleeds in the forest like a wounded hart!  
Succeeding monarchs heard the subjects' cries, 85  
Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful cottage rise:  
Then gath'ring flocks on unknown mountains fed,  
O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread,

The forest wonder'd at th' unusual grain,  
90 And secret transports touch'd the conscious swain.  
Fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess, rears  
Her cheerful head, and leads the golden years.

Ye vig'rous Swains! while youth ferments your blood,  
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,  
95 Now range the hills, the gameful woods beset,  
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.  
When milder Autumn Summer's heat succeeds,  
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,  
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,  
100 Panting with hope, he tries the furrow'd grounds;  
But when the tainted gales the game betray,  
Couch'd close he lies, and meditates the prey;  
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,  
Till hov'ring o'er them sweeps the swelling net.  
105 Thus (if small things we may with great compare)  
When Albion sends her eager sons to war,  
Some thoughtless town, with ease and plenty blest,  
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest;  
Sudden they seize th' amaz'd, defenceless prize,  
110 And high in air Britannia's standard flies.

See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,  
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:  
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,  
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.  
115 Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,  
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,  
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,  
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?  
Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,  
120 The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny.

To plains with well-breathed beagles we repair,  
And trace the mazes of the circling hare  
(Beasts, urged by us, their fellow beasts pursue,  
And learn of man each other to undo).  
With slaught'ring guns th' unwearied fowler roves, 125  
When frosts have whiten'd all the naked groves,  
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,  
And lonely woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade.  
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye;  
Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky: 130  
Oft, as in airy rings they skim the heath,  
The clam'rous lapwings feel the leaden death;  
Oft, as the mounting larks their notes prepare,  
They fall, and leave their little lives in air.

In genial Spring, beneath the quiv'ring shade, 135  
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,  
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,  
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand:  
With looks unmov'd, he hopes the scaly breed,  
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed. 140  
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,  
The bright-eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye,  
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd,  
The yellow carp, in scales bedropp'd with gold,  
Swift trouts, diversified with crimson stains, 145  
And pikes, the tyrants of the wat'ry plains.

Now Cancer glows with Phœbus' fiery car:  
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,  
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,  
Rouse the fleet hart, and cheer the opening hound. 150  
Th' impatient courser pants in every vein,  
And, pawing, seems to beat the distant plain:

- Hills, vales, and floods appear already cross'd,  
And ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.  
155 See the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep,  
Rush thro' the thickets, down the valleys sweep,  
Hang o'er their coursers' heads with eager speed,  
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed.  
Let old Arcadia boast her ample plain,  
160 Th' immortal huntress,<sup>o</sup> and her virgin train;  
Nor envy, Windsor! since thy shades have seen  
As bright a Goddess, and as chaste a Queen<sup>o</sup>;  
Whose care, like hers, protects the sylvan reign,  
The earth's fair light, and Empress of the Main.  
165 Here too, 'tis sung, of old Diana stray'd,  
And Cynthus' top forsook for Windsor shade;  
Here was she seen o'er airy wastes to rove,  
Seek the clear spring, or haunt the pathless grove;  
Here arm'd with silver bows, in early dawn,  
170 Her buskin'd virgins traced the dewy lawn.  
Above the rest a rural nymph was famed,  
Thy offspring, Thames! the fair Lodona named  
(Lodona's fate, in long oblivion cast,  
The Muse shall sing, and what she sings shall last).  
175 Scarce could the Goddess from her nymph be known  
But by the crescent and the golden zone.  
She scorn'd the praise of beauty, and the care;  
A belt her waist, a fillet binds her hair;  
A painted quiver on her shoulder sounds,  
180 And with her dart the flying deer she wounds.  
It chanced as, eager of the chase, the maid  
Beyond the forest's verdant limits stray'd,  
Pan saw and lov'd, and, burning with desire,  
Pursued her flight; her flight increas'd his fire.

Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly, 185  
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky;  
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,  
When thro' the clouds he drives the trembling doves:  
As from the God she flew with furious pace,  
Or as the God, more furious, urged the chase. 190  
Now fainting, sinking, pale, the Nymph appears;  
Now close behind, his sounding steps she hears;  
And now his shadow reach'd her as she run,  
His shadow lengthen'd by the setting sun;  
And now his shorter breath, with sultry air, 195  
Pants on her neck, and fans her parting hair.  
In vain on Father Thames she calls for aid,  
Nor could Diana help her injur'd maid.  
Faint, breathless, thus she pray'd, nor pray'd in vain:  
'Ah, Cynthia! ah — tho' banish'd from thy train, 200  
Let me, O let me, to the shades repair,  
My native shades — there weep, and murmur there!'  
She said, and melting as in tears she lay,  
In a soft silver stream dissolv'd away.  
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps, 205  
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps;  
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,<sup>o</sup>  
And bathes the forest where she ranged before.  
In her chaste current oft the Goddess laves,  
And with celestial tears augments the waves. 210  
Oft in her glass the musing shepherd spies<sup>o</sup>  
The headlong mountains and the downward skies;  
The wat'ry landscape of the pendant woods,  
And absent trees that tremble in the floods:  
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen, 215  
And floating forests paint the waves with green;

Thro' the fair scene roll slow the ling'ring streams,  
Then foaming pour along, and rush into the Thames.

Thou, too, great Father of the British Floods!

220 With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods;  
Where tow'ring oaks their growing honours rear,  
And future navies on thy shores appear.  
Not Neptune's self from all his streams receives  
A wealthier tribute than to thine he gives.

225 No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,  
No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.  
Nor Po so swells the fabling poet's lays,  
While led along the skies his current strays,  
As thine, which visits Windsor's famed abodes,  
230 To grace the mansion of our earthly Gods:  
Nor all his stars above a lustre show,  
Like the bright beauties on thy banks below;  
Where Jove, subdued by mortal passion still,  
Might change Olympus for a nobler hill.

235 Happy the man whom this bright court approves,  
His Sov'reign favours, and his Country loves<sup>o</sup>:  
Happy next him, who to these shades retires,  
Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires:  
Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,  
240 Successive study, exercise, and ease.

He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,  
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:  
With chemic art exalts the mineral powers,  
And draws the aromatic souls of flowers:

245 Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;  
O'er figured worlds now travels with his eye;  
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,  
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:



Or wand'ring thoughtful in the silent wood,  
Attends the duties of the wise and good, 250  
T' observe a mean, be to himself a friend,  
To follow Nature, and regard his end;  
Or looks on Heav'n with more than mortal eyes,  
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,  
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam, 255  
Survey the region, and confess her home!  
Such was the life great Scipio once admired: —  
Thus Atticus, and *Trumbull* thus retired.

Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,  
Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions bless, 260  
Bear me, O bear me to sequester'd scenes,  
The bowery mazes, and surrounding greens;  
To Thames's banks, which fragrant breezes fill,  
Or where ye Muses sport on Cooper's hill.<sup>o</sup>  
(On Cooper's hill eternal wreaths shall grow, 265  
While lasts the mountain, or while Thames shall flow.)  
I seem thro' consecrated walks to rove;  
I hear soft music die along the grove:  
Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,  
By godlike Poets venerable made: 270  
Here his first lays majestic Denham<sup>o</sup> sung;  
There the last numbers flow'd from Cowley's<sup>o</sup> tongue.  
Oh early lost! what tears the river shed,  
When the sad pomp along his banks was led!  
His drooping swans on every note expire, 275  
And on his willows hung each Muse's lyre.

Since Fate relentless stopp'd their heav'nly voice,  
No more the forests ring, or groves rejoice;  
Who now shall charm the shades where Cowley strung  
His living harp, and lofty Denham sung? 280

But hark ! the groves rejoice, the forest rings !  
Are these revived, or is it *Granville* sings ?  
'Tis yours, my Lord, to bless our soft retreats,  
And call the Muses to their ancient seats ;  
285 To paint anew the flowery sylvan scenes,  
To crown the forests with immortal greens,  
Make Windsor-hills in lofty numbers rise,  
And lift her turrets nearer to the skies ;  
To sing those honours you deserve to wear,  
290 And add new lustre to her silver star !

Here noble Surrey<sup>o</sup> felt the sacred rage,  
Surrey, the Granville of a former age :  
Matchless his pen, victorious was his lance,  
Bold in the lists, and graceful in the dance :  
295 In the same shades the Cupids tuned his lyre,  
To the same notes of love and soft desire ;  
Fair Geraldine,<sup>o</sup> bright object of his vow,  
Then fill'd the groves, as heav'nly *Mira*<sup>o</sup> now.

Oh wouldst thou sing what heroes Windsor bore,  
300 What Kings first breathed upon her winding shore,  
Or raise old warriors, whose ador'd remains  
In weeping vaults her hallow'd earth contains !  
With Edward's<sup>o</sup> acts adorn the shining page,  
Stretch his long triumphs down thro' every age,  
305 Draw Monarchs chain'd,<sup>o</sup> and Cressi's<sup>o</sup> glorious field,  
The lilies blazing on the regal shield :  
Then, from her roofs when Verrio's<sup>o</sup> colours fall,  
And leave inanimate the naked wall,  
Still in thy song should vanquish'd France appear,  
310 And bleed for ever under Britain's spear.

Let softer strains ill-fated Henry<sup>o</sup> mourn,  
And palms eternal flourish round his urn.

Here o'er the martyr-king the marble weeps,  
And, fast beside him, once-fear'd Edward<sup>o</sup> sleeps,  
Whom not th' extended Albion could contain, 315  
From old Bellerium<sup>o</sup> to the northern main;  
The grave unites; where ev'n the great find rest,  
And blended lie th' oppressor and th' opprest!

Make sacred Charles's<sup>o</sup> tomb for ever known  
(Obscure the place, and uninscribed the stone); 320  
Oh fact accurs'd! what tears has Albion shed,  
Heav'ns! what new wounds! and how her old have bled!  
She saw her sons with purple death expire,<sup>o</sup>  
Her sacred domes involv'd in rolling fire,  
A dreadful series of intestine wars, 325  
Inglorious triumphs, and dishonest scars.

At length great ANNA said, 'Let discord cease!'  
She said! the world obey'd, and all was peace!

In that blest moment from his oozy bed  
Old father Thames advanced his rev'rend head; 330  
His tresses dropp'd with dew, and o'er the stream  
His shining horns diffused a golden gleam:  
Graved on his urn appear'd the moon, that guides  
His swelling waters and alternate tides;  
The figured streams in waves of silver roll'd, 335  
And on her banks Augusta<sup>o</sup> rose in gold.

Around his throne the sea-born brothers stood,  
Who swell with tributary urns his flood:  
First the famed authors of his ancient name;  
The winding Isis, and the fruitful Thame; 340  
The Kennet swift, for silver eels renown'd;  
The Lodden slow, with verdant alders crown'd;  
Cole, whose dark streams his flowery islands lave;  
And chalky Wey, that rolls a milky wave:

- 345 The blue, transparent Vandalis<sup>o</sup> appears;  
The gulfy Lee his sedgy tresses rears;  
And sullen Mole,<sup>o</sup> that hides his diving flood;  
And silent Darent, stain'd with Danish flood.  
High in the midst, upon his arm reclin'd  
350 (His sea-green mantle waving with the wind),  
The God appear'd: he turn'd his azure eyes  
Where Windsor-domes and pompous turrets rise;  
Then bow'd and spoke; the winds forget to roar,  
And the hush'd waves glide softly to the shore.  
355 'Hail, sacred Peace<sup>o</sup>! hail, long-expected days,  
That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise!  
Tho' Tiber's streams immortal Rome behold,  
Tho' foaming Hermus swells with tides of gold,  
From Heav'n itself tho' sev'nfold Nilus flows,<sup>o</sup>  
360 And harvests on a hundred realms bestows;  
These now no more shall be the Muse's themes,  
Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.  
Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,  
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine;  
365 Let barb'rous Ganges arm a servile train,  
Be mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.  
No more my sons shall dye with British blood  
Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood:  
Safe on my shore each unmolested swain  
370 Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;  
The shady empire shall retain no trace  
Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chase;  
The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,  
And arms employ'd on birds and beasts alone.  
375 Behold! th' ascending villas on my side  
Project long shadows o'er the crystal tide;

Behold ! Augusta's glitt'ring spires increase,<sup>o</sup>  
And temples rise, the beauteous works of Peace.  
I see, I see, where two fair cities bend  
Their ample brow, a new Whitehall ascend ! 380  
There mighty nations shall inquire their doom,  
The world's great oracle in times to come ;  
There Kings shall sue, and suppliant states be seen  
Once more to bend before a British Queen.

'Thy trees, fair Windsor ! now shall leave their woods, 385  
And half thy forests rush into my floods,  
Bear Britain's thunder, and her cross<sup>o</sup> display  
To the bright regions of the rising day ;  
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,  
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen pole ; 390  
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,  
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales !  
For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,  
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,  
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold, 395  
And Phœbus warm the ripening ore to gold.  
The time shall come, when, free as seas or wind,  
Unbounded Thames<sup>o</sup> shall flow for all mankind,  
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,  
And seas but join the regions they divide ; 400  
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,  
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.  
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,  
And feather'd people crowd my wealthy side ;  
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire 405  
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire !  
O stretch thy reign, fair Peace ! from shore to shore,  
Till conquest cease, and slavery be no more ;

Till the freed Indians in their native groves  
410 Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves;  
Peru once more a race of kings behold,  
And other Mexicos be roof'd with gold.  
Exiled by thee from earth to deepest Hell,  
In brazen bonds shall barb'rous Discord dwell:  
415 Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,  
And mad Ambition shall attend her there:  
There purple Vengeance, bathed in gore, retires,  
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires:  
There hated Envy her own snakes shall feel,  
420 And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:  
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,  
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain.'

Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallow'd lays  
Touch the fair fame of Albion's golden days:  
425 The thoughts of Gods let *Granville's* verse recite,  
And bring the scenes of opening fate to light,  
My humble Muse, in unambitious strains,  
Paints the green forests and the flowery plains,  
Where Peace descending bids her olives spring,  
430 And scatters blessings from her dovelike wing.  
Ev'n I more sweetly pass my careless days,  
Pleas'd in the silent shade with empty praise;  
Enough for me that to the list'ning swains  
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.

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## NOTES

### THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

#### CANTO I

THIS poem, it appears, was written at the request of Pope's friend, Mr. Carryl, and published in 1712, with the consent of the heroine herself. Mr. Carryl proposed the writing of the poem with the view of putting to an end, by this ridicule, a quarrel that had risen between two noble families, — that of Lord Petre and that of Miss Fermor, whom the former had offended by cutting off a lock of her hair. The author sent the poem to the lady, who was an acquaintance of his, and she was so well pleased with it that she gave copies of it around to her friends. The first sketch was written in two cantos; but encouraged by his success, Pope conceived the idea of introducing the sylphs and gnomes, and extended it to five cantos.

The following is the letter written by Pope in the Dedication : —

“ TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR

“ MADAM, — It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake, to consent to the publication

of one more correct : this I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

“The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons, are made to act in a poem : for the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies ; let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

“I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady ; but it is so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms. The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *La Comte de Gabalis*, which, both in its title and size, is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes, or Dæmons of earth, delight in mischief ; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable ; for, they say, any mortal may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, — an inviolate preservation of chastity.

“As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones ; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

“If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person or

in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so uncensured as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam,

“Your most obedient, humble servant,

“A. POPE.”

The title Mrs., not Miss, was prefixed to the names of unmarried ladies as well as to those of married ladies, Miss being used only for children and young girls not grown up. Miss Fermor, in 1714, married Mr. Perkins of Reading. She died in 1738.

1. Note how the opening lines suggest the Epic. Cf. with the opening lines of the *Iliad*:—

“Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring  
Of woes unnumbered, heav'nly goddess, sing.”

Or with the *Odyssey*:—

“Tell me, Muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy.”

Or with the *Æneid*:—

“I sing of arms and the hero who first from the shores of Troy,” etc.

Also cf. the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*.

3. **Carryl**. The friend who suggested writing the poem.

4. **Belinda**. Miss Fermor.

8. The **Lord** was Lord Petre.

23. **Birthing Beau**. A fine gentleman such as might appear at a ball given in honor of a royal birthday.

32. **The silver token**. The coin found in the shoe of the tidy housemaid.

**The circled green**. The fairy rings in the grass where the fairies were supposed to have danced.

44. The **Box** at the opera ; the **Ring**, the circle in Hyde Park, London.

85. **Garters, stars, and coronets** are emblems of rank and honor.

108. **The clear mirror**, etc. The language of the Platonists (Pope).

135. **The elephant**. The ivory from the elephant's tusk.

## CANTO II

8. **Might kiss . . . adore**. Because of its richness and value.

28. **Single hair**. An allusion to Hudibras : —

“And though it be a two-foot trout  
’Tis with a single hair pulled out.”

38. **Vast French romances**. Some of the French romances of the day were in ten volumes, of about eight hundred pages each.

45. See the *Aeneid*, XI, 794-795.

74. In imitation of Satan's call, *Paradise Lost*, V, 601.

“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers.”

107. Note the anti-climax.

113. **The drops**. Ear-rings of brilliants.

116. **Shock**. Her favourite dog ?

133. See **Ixion** in the Myths.

## CANTO III

3. Hampton Court.

22. An allusion to a line from Congreve.

27. **Ombre**. A Spanish card game then fashionable in England.

33. **Matadores**, named from the slayers in the bull fight, were the principal trump cards.

49. **Spadillo**. The ace of spades, and the highest trump.

51. **Manillo**. The second highest trump.

53. **Basto.** The third highest trump.
62. **Pam** and **Leo** are obsolete card games.
92. **Codille.** The pool. Belinda, having made the trump, loses the pool and must replace it for the next game if she fails to win more tricks than her opponents.
106. It was fashionable to grind and make the coffee in the drawing-room.
107. **Altars of Japan.** Small japanned tables.
124. **Nisus**, king of Megara, had on his head a certain purple lock, and by a decree of the fates could not be conquered so long as it remained unshorn. When Minos, king of Crete, made war upon Megara, Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, seeing him from a high tower, at once fell in love with him. Having resolved to give up the city to him, she crept by night to her father's sleeping room, cut off the fatal lock, took it to Minos, and told him that Megara was now his own. That king, however, shrank from her in abhorrence, made an equitable treaty with Nisus, and sailed away. Scylla was metamorphosed into a bird, and ever after pursued by her father, who had likewise been changed to a sea-eagle.
152. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, VI, 330-334.
160. Cf. the anticlimax in Canto II, v. 106, and Canto IV, v. 120. Find others.
165. **Atalantis.** A popular book of the time.
166. Visitors were sometimes received in ladies' bedrooms, at which times the beds were decorated with handsome counterpanes and small, lace-trimmed pillows.
171. Does Pope mean Richard Steele? Is this a pun?

## CANTO IV

1. Cf. the *Æneid*, IV, 1.
24. **Megrim.** The "megrimms" and the "vapours" were, in Queen Anne's day, popular terms for what we call "the blues."

51. **Homer's tripod.** See the *Iliad*, XVIII, 372-381.
52. "Alludes to the fact that a certain lady once imagined herself in this condition" (Pope).
69. Citron water was distilled from citron rind.
82. In Bk. X of the *Odyssey*, Ulysses tells how Æolus gave him the winds tied up in a bag, which, his men untying, flew out and wrecked his ships.
89. **Thalestris.** Mrs. Morley, sister of Sir Plume. See v. 121.
102. Lead fasteners for the curl papers.
118. **The Bow.** A most unfashionable quarter of London.
121. **Sir Plume.** Sir George Brown, the only person mentioned who took the matter seriously. He was angry at his portrait here given, because he says nothing but foolishness.
162. **Patches** of black "court" plaster were a part of the feminine adornment. Whig ladies wore them on one side of the face, Tory ladies on the other.

## CANTO V

6. See the *Æneid*. Anna was the sister of Dido.
14. The gentlemen occupied the side boxes, the ladies the front boxes, at the theatre.
71. Cf. the *Iliad*, VIII, and the *Æneid*, XII.
- 99-106. In imitation of the *Iliad*, II, the progress of Agamemnon's sceptre.
137. **Partridge.** John Partridge, a so-called astronomer and almanac maker, who yearly predicted the downfall of the Pope at Rome and the king of France. Swift made him the butt of a famous hoax, in 1707.
138. What were **Galileo's eyes**?

## AN ESSAY ON MAN

The following is a part of Pope's preface to the poem : —

## “ THE DESIGN

“ Having proposed to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners, such as, to use my Lord Bacon's expression, ‘ come home to men's business and bosoms,’ I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state: since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

“ The science of Human Nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last; and, I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect, system of ethics.”

## EPISTLE I

## ARGUMENT

*Of Man in the abstract.* I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, verse 17, etc. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, verse 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, verse 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, verse 113, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, verse 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels, and, on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree would render him miserable, verse 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world a universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of Sense, Instinct, Thought, Reflection, Reason : that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties, verse 207, etc. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend above and below us; were any part of which broken, not



that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, verse 213, etc. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, verse 209, etc. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, verse 281, etc., to the end.

1. **St. John.** Lord Bolingbroke, one of Pope's most intimate friends, one with whom he had discussed the themes of the Essay. Bolingbroke is said to have supplied much of the substance of the argument. For his career, see the history of England.

6. **A mighty maze.** Lowell thinks the line as first written better expresses Pope's view, *i.e.*:—

“A mighty maze of walk without a plan.”

16. Cp. *Paradise Lost*:—

“And justify the ways of God to man.”

33. Alludes to the chain which Homer refers to as supporting the world.

63. **Apis.** The ox was worshipped in Egypt under the name of Apis.

88. See *St. Matthew* x, 29.

102. **Solar walk.** The sun's orbit; in allusion to the ancient idea that souls went thither.

144. Lisbon, Spain, suffered from such an earthquake, 1755.

156. **Cæsar Borgia**, d. 1507, known as the scourge of Italy.

**Catiline**, the conspirator opposed by Cicero.

160. Alexander the Great, declared by the priests of Libya to be the son of Jupiter Ammon.

213. In a note, Pope states that the lioness, on first starting out, utters a loud roar and then listens to hear the prey running from her, pursuing it by sound rather than by scent.

278. **Seraph.** The word signifies “burner.”

## EPISTLE II

## ARGUMENT

I. The business of Man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature ; his powers and frailties, verses 1 to 19. The limits of his capacity, verse 19, etc. II. The two principles of Man, Self-love and Reason, both necessary. Self-love the stronger, and why. Their end the same, verse 81, etc. III. The Passions, and their use. The predominant passion, and its force. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, verse 93, etc. IV. Virtue and Vice joined in our mixed nature ; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident : what is the office of Reason, verse 203, etc. V. How odious Vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, verse 217, etc. VI. That, however, the ends of Providence, and general goods, are answered in our passions and imperfections. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men : how useful they are to Society ; and to individuals ; in every state, and every age of life, verse 238, etc., to the end.

22. **Correct old Time.** Alludes to Newton's Grecian chronology.

108. The **card** on which the points of the compass are marked, signifying the compass itself.

200. **Decius** rushed to death in battle because a vision had informed him that the army whose general should fall would be victorious.

**Curtius** leaped into the gulf which would not close until the most precious thing in Rome, an armed and mounted soldier, had been cast in.

204. **God within the mind.** Conscience. Plato's expression.

269. **Chymist.** The alchemist in search of the philosopher's stone.

275-281. **Behold the child,** etc. Cf. Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*.

### EPISTLE III

#### ARGUMENT

I. The whole Universe one system of Society. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another. The happiness of animals mutual, verse 7, etc. II. Reason or Instinct operates alike to the good of each individual. Reason or Instinct operates also to Society in all animals, verse 49, etc. III. How far Society carried by Instinct;—how much farther by reason, verse 109, etc. IV. Of that which is called the state of nature. Reason instructed by Instinct in the invention of arts; and in the forms of Society, verse 144, etc. V. Origin of political societies;—origin of Monarchy;—patriarchal government, verse 199, etc. VI. Origin of true Religion and Government, from the same principle of Love;—origin of Superstition and Tyranny, from the same principle of Fear. The influence of Self-love operating to the social and public good. Restoration of true Religion and Government on their first principle. Mixed government. Various forms of each, and the true end of all, verse 215, etc.

68. **Favour'd of man.** It was a common ancient, and is still an Oriental, belief that those struck by lightning are especially favored by the gods.

104. **Demoivre**, an eminent French mathematician and friend of Newton (1667-1754). Driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he went to London, where he died.

## EPISTLE IV

## ARGUMENT

I. False notions of Happiness, philosophical and popular, answered, from verses 19 to 26. II. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all. God intends Happiness to be equal ; and, to be so, it must be social, since all particular Happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular laws. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of Society, that external goods should be unequal, Happiness is not made to consist in these. But notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of Happiness among mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of Hope and Fear, verse 29, etc. III. What the Happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world ; and that the good man has here the advantage. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of Nature, or of Fortune, verse 77, etc. IV. The folly of expecting that God should alter his general laws in favour of particulars, verse 123, etc. V. That we are not judges who are good ; but that whoever they are, they must be happiest, verse 131, etc. VI. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of, Virtue. That even these can make no man happy without Virtue :—instanced in Riches ; Honours ; Nobility ; Greatness ; Fame ; Superior Talents, with pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, verse 149, etc. VII. That Virtue only constitutes a Happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal. That the perfection of Virtue and Happiness consists in a conformity to the Order of Providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, verse 327, etc.

26. **Doubt of all.** The Sceptics.

74. **Mountains piled on mountains.** According to mythology the Titans piled Ossa on Pelion in their attempt to scale Olympus.

99. **Falkland.** Lord Falkland (1610-1643), a brilliant young statesman killed in the battle of Newburg.

100-101. Henry, Vicomte of **Turenne**, and Sir Philip **Sidney** both fell in battle; both are famed for their bravery and unselfishness.

104. **Digby.** The Honourable Robert Digby, on whom Pope wrote an epitaph. He was a friend and correspondent of Pope's.

107. **Marseilles.** M. de Belsance, who became bishop of Marseilles in 1709, distinguished himself by his zeal during the plague of 1720, at which time he acted as pastor, physician, and magistrate to his flock. Though offered a more desirable bishopric in 1723, he refused to leave the people endeared to him by suffering. He died in 1755.

110. The poet's mother, Edith Pope, died at the age of ninety-one, in the year this poem was finished. See biography of Pope for his affection toward her.

123. **Sages.** An allusion to the fate of Empedocles and Pliny, both of whom perished by too near an approach to Etna and Vesuvius, while exploring the cause of the eruptions.

126. Mr. **Bethel**, a friend of Pope's, to whom *Imitations of Horace* are addressed.

130. **F. Chartres**, an infamous gambler who became rich and avaricious and was hated by every one; d. 1731.

146. It is said that Titus, one evening on recollecting that he had done no good to any one person that day, exclaimed, "I have lost a day."

216. **Howard.** One of England's proudest families.

220. Alexander the Great went insane before his death. Charles XII of Sweden could scarcely be compared with Alexan-

der, who was capable of forethought and could certainly see much "farther than his nose."

235. **Aurelius.** M. Aurelius Antoninus, Emperor of Rome, 161-180 A.D.

236. As Socrates died by drinking hemlock, Pope uses "bleed" in a metaphorical sense. Lowell believes that here, as in 220-224, he has been tempted into epigrammatic expression.

244. Prince **Eugene** of Savoy, who fought with Marlborough at Blenheim and Malplaquet. Napoleon ranked him with Turenne and Frederick the Great as a general. He was living when this poem was published.

257. **Marcellus** was an enemy of Julius Cæsar who, after the battle of Pharsalus, fled to Mitylene. It is supposed that he here stands for the Duke of Ormund, who, at the death of Queen Anne, fled from England to join the Pretender.

278. **Lord Umbra.** Bubb Dodington, afterward Lord Melcombe. Here, as in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (v. 280), his name is coupled with that of Sir William Yonge.

281. Lord Bacon, though possessed of distinguished talents, was condemned for and confessed bribery and corruption while presiding in the Supreme Court of Equity.

301-308. Alludes to the Duke of Marlborough, whose wife Sarah possessed a terrible temper.

373. **Friend.** Bolingbroke. See note to v. 1, *Epistle I*.

## AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

This, the first mature original work of the author, was written in 1709, when Pope was in his twentieth year. It was not published till 1711.

### PART I

INTRODUCTION. — That it is as great a fault to judge ill as to write ill, and a more dangerous one to the public. That a true Taste is

as rare to be found as a true Genius. That most men are born with some Taste, but spoiled by false education. The multitude of Critics, and causes of them. That we are to study our own Taste, and know the limits of it. Nature the best guide of judgment. Improved by Art and rules, which are but methodized Nature. Rules derived from the practice of the ancient poets. That therefore the ancients are necessary to be studied by a Critic, particularly Homer and Vergil. Of licenses, and the use of them by the ancients. Reverence due to the ancients, and praise of them.

4. **Sense.** Judgment.

15. **Such.** *I.e.* those. *Such* is the antecedent of *who*.

20. **Most.** *Persons* must be supplied here.

26. **Different schools or systems of philosophy, etc.**

34. **Mævius.** This inferior poet of the Augustan age owes his present fame to the fact that Vergil and Horace, whom he attacked, made him the subject of ridicule.

**Apollo.** The president and defender of the Muses.

35. Those **who**.

36. **Wits.** Men of learning.

43. **Generation.** Origin ; an allusion to the belief that insects were generatèd in the mud of the Nile.

66. **Sev'ral.** Peculiar, separate.

72. **Nature** is the subject of *must impart*. What is the object?

73. **Art.** In apposition with *Nature*.

80. **Wit.** Genius.

84. 'Tis **more to guide.** *I.e.* it is more important to guide.

86. Pegasus, the winged steed of the Muses.

92. **Indites.** Produces, composes.

109. **Bills.** *I.e.* prescriptions.

120. **Fable.** *I.e.* plot.

129. Vergil was born at Mantua, 70 B.C. His full name was Publius Vergilius Maro.

133. **But.** *I.e.* except.

138. Aristotle was born at Stagira in Macedonia, hence the name **the Stagirite**.

142. Elegance or felicity of expression.

158. **Prospects.** Landscapes.

182-183. Pope here alludes to the four principal causes of ravages among the ancient writings: the destruction of the Alexandrine and Palatine libraries by fire; the rage of the lesser poets against wit; the invasions of the barbarians; and the reign of ignorance and superstition during long ages.

## PART II

Causes hindering a true judgment. **Pride.** Imperfect learning. Judging by parts, and not by the whole. **Critics** in wit, language, versification only. Being too hard to please, or too apt to admire. **Partiality** — too much love to a sect — to the ancients or moderns. **Prejudice** or prevention. **Singularity.** Inconstancy. **Party spirit.** **Envy.** Against envy, and in praise of good-nature. When severity is chiefly to be used by critics.

16. **Pierian.** From Mt. Pierus in Thessaly, sacred to the Muses.

37. **Malignant dull delight.** Of seeking to find faults.

48. **Thine, O Rome!** St. Peter's dome.

67. **La Mancha's Knight.** Don Quixote.

70. **Dennis.** A mediocre poet with whom Pope quarrelled.

86. **Curious, nice.** Hard to please.

89. **Conceit.** Here used in the sense of an affected or fanciful notion.

108. **Content.** By acquiescence without examination.

122. **Sort.** Are suited.

128. **Fungoso.** A character in one of Ben Jonson's plays who assumed the dress and tried to pass for another.

129. **Sparks.** Gay, showy persons.



137. **Most.** Supply *persons*.

144. **These.** The subject of *require*.

146. A reference to Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, in which he inveighs against the poet who "creeps along with ten little words in a line and helps out his numbers with all the expletives he can find, while the sense is left half tired behind."

156. An **Alexandrine** is a line of twelve syllables, so named from a French poem on Alexander written in that form. Verse 157 is an Alexandrine.

161. Sir John **Denham** (1615-1668) and Edmund **Waller** (1606-1687) wrote verses famed in their own day for strength and sweetness.

172. **Camilla**, queen of the Volscians, who led her army against Æneas, was remarkable for her swiftness. She has been described as being so fleet that she flew over the corn without bending the stalks and over the water without wetting her feet.

174. **Timotheus.** See Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*.

176. **Libyan Jove.** See note to v. 160, Epistle I, of *An Essay on Man*.

194. **Some.** The subject of *despise*.

204. **Each.** Supply *age*.

215. **Quality.** Those of high rank.

224. The **vulgar.** The common people.

240. **School-divines.** The schoolmen, or hair-splitting philosophers and divines of the Middle Ages, who adopted the principles of Aristotle and spent much time in speculations of so theoretical a nature as to seem absurd to modern philosophers.

241. **Sentences.** That is, quotations from recognized authorities in the church.

244. **Scotists.** Followers of Duns Scotus, a famous schoolman of the fourteenth century, who defended the immaculate conception of the Virgin.

**Thomists.** Followers of Thomas Aquinas, a contemporary of Scotus, who denied the immaculate conception. See note, v. 240.

245. **Ducklane.** A place in London where old books were sold.

263. Sir Richard **Blackmore**, a court physician in the reigns of William III and Anne, has been characterized as one of the "most voluminous poetasters of his own or any other age."

Rev. Luke **Milbourne.** One of Dryden's most just critics.

265. **Zoilus.** An ancient who severely criticised Homer.

279. In antediluvian times.

296. It refers to *wit* or *genius*.

309. **Commence** or begin to be.

336. The **easy monarch** was Charles II.

345. **Socinus.** An Italian theologian of the sixteenth century who denied the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality of the devil, the total depravity of man, and the eternity of future punishment.

### PART III

Rules for the conduct and manners in a Critic. Candour. Modesty. Good breeding. Sincerity and freedom of advice. When one's counsel is to be restrained. Character of an incorrigible poet. And of an impertinent critic. Character of a good critic. The history of Criticism, and characters of the best critics; Aristotle. Horace. Dionysius. Petronius. Quintilian. Longinus. Of the decay of Criticism, and its revival. Erasmus. Vida. Boileau. Lord Roscommon, etc. Conclusion.

26. **Appius.** Dennis; see note, v. 70, Part II.

40. **So long.** To such an extent.

58. **Durfey.** Thomas D'Urfey, a witty writer of plays and poems in the reign of Charles II, with whom he was a favorite. Pope here refers to his best-known work, *Pills to Purge Melancholy*.

60. **Garth.** Sir Samuel Garth (1661-1719), an English physician and poet who wrote *The Dispensary*, a poetical satire on apothecaries and physicians who gave medicines gratuitously to the poor.

64. The neighborhood of St. Paul's was, before the great fire, the headquarters of the booksellers.

89. **Mæonia**, in Asia Minor, is believed by some to have been the birthplace of Homer. Aristotle derived many of his elements of criticism from Homer, the *Mæonian star*.

106. **Dionysius**, a critic, rhetorician, and historian, born at Halicarnassus, 50 B.C., spent most of his life in Rome.

108. **Petronius.** The voluptuary who had charge of the entertainments in the court of Nero.

110. **Quintilian.** A famous Roman rhetorician and critic (42 ?-118 ? A.D.).

116. **Longinus.** A Platonic philosopher of the third century, whose knowledge was so great that he was called a "living library" and a "walking museum," and hence Pope speaks of him as inspired by all the nine Muses.

133. **The Goths.** The barbarian tribes that overran the Roman empire.

134. **Erasmus.** A distinguished scholar who renounced his vows as a monk in the time of the Reformation. He did much to promote the revival of learning.

137. By **Vandals** Pope here means the monks.

138. **Leo X**, who reigned as Pope from 1513 to 1521, was a scholar and patron of learning and art. He made his court the meeting-place for the scholars of the world.

145. **Raphael** (1483-1520). He ranks as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, painters. He was employed by Leo X to paint the wonderful frescos of the Vatican.

**Vida.** An Italian poet and contemporary of Raphael. He was born near Mantua, the birthplace of Vergil.

155. **Boileau.** A French poet and critic of the seventeenth century who exerted a great influence upon French literature. In 1674 he published his *L'Art Poétique*, which Pope has imitated in this poem.

164-165. An allusion to the Duke of Buckingham's *Essay on Poetry*.

166. **Roscommon.** The Earl of Roscommon was a poet of the Restoration and a translator of Horace.

170. **William Walsh.** A poet, a man of fashion, and a friend of Pope's. See the Biography.

### EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

Pope, in the *Advertisement* printed with the *Satires* of which this *Epistle* is the *Prologue*, calls this a "bill of complaint" which he had drawn up from time to time with no thought of publishing till he was attacked, not only in his writings, but in his person, morals, and family.

Title. **John Arbuthnot** (1675-1736). A physician to Prince George of Denmark and Queen Anne, a scholar, and a Tory friend of Pope, Swift, and Gay. Of him Swift said: "He has more wit than we all have, and more humanity than wit."

1. **John Searl.** Pope's body-servant for many years.

8. **Grot.** The famous grotto passing under the highway and connecting the two parts of his gardens.

13. The **Mint** was a place of refuge for insolvent debtors where they were suffered to afford each other illegal protection from the prosecution of their creditors.

21. **Twit'nam** and Twitenham were names affected by Pope for his little estate of Twickenham.

23. **Arthur Moore.** A contemporary politician. Pope had often ridiculed his son, James Moore-Smythe.

38. Pope suffered almost constantly from headaches.

40. Horace's advice.

41. **Drury Lane** had been an aristocratic part of London, but its respectability had begun to decline in the seventeenth century.

43. The "London season."

49. "**Pitholeon**, a name taken from a foolish poet of Rhodes who pretended to much Greek" (Pope).

53. Edmund **Curll**, a piratical printer who was alternately Pope's tool and his enemy. See Pope, *English Men of Letters*, Chap. VI.

54. The London **Journal** was a Whig paper. Pope was little of a politician, but rather favored the Tories.

56. Mr. Burford, the author of the tragedy, *The Virgin Queen*, had displeased Pope by adopting his machinery of the Sylphs in his semi-heroical poem, *The Assembly*.

60. In early editions this line read: —

"Cibber and I are luckily no friends."

Pope's drama, *Three Hours after Marriage*, was a flat failure. Cibber ridiculed it and was therefore immortalized by Pope as the main figure in the Dunciad.

62. Bernard **Lintot** published much of Pope's work.

69-71. **Midas** was given asses' ears for preferring Pan's music to Apollo's. Some say his wife discovered his shame; others, his barber. See Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale*.

86. Pope ridiculed Addison for using the expression "the mighty crack" in translating Horace, *Ode III*, v. 3:—

"Si fractus illabatur orbis  
Impavidum ferient ruinæ."

97. **Colley Cibber**. See note, v. 60.

98. **Henley**, commonly called Orator Henley, on Sunday made

addresses on religion and on Wednesdays on science before the butchers of Newport Market and Butcher Row.

**Arthur Moore.** See v. 23. He frequently headed masonic processions.

100. Ambrose **Philips**, through the patronage of Bishop Bolter, became primate of Ireland.

101. **Sappho.** Probably Lady Mary Montague.

117. **Ammon's great son.** Alexander the Great.

118. It is surprising that he should mention his eyes among his infirmities. His eyes were fine and piercing.

128. He wrote earlier than he could remember.

135-141. All these were friends and admirers of Pope who advised him in his earliest works.

140. **Atterbury**, Bishop of Rochester, made this gesture when pleased.

146. Authors of a secret and scandalous history.

148. Pope here refers to his own *Windsor Forest* and other very early poems.

149. **Fanny.** Lord Hervey, the Sporus of 305-333.

151. Charles **Gildon** squandered his fortune and then lived by writing abusive pamphlets.

153. John **Dennis**, though a forcible but unrefined critic, was by no means the dunce Pope makes him out. He was a free lance in letters and one of the favorite butts of Pope's satire.

156. See note to v. 13.

164. **Bentley** had issued an unworthy edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1732.

**Tibbald** or Theobald had not only criticised Pope's edition of Shakespeare, but had prepared a better edition of his own.

180. Ambrose Philips had translated a book of Persian tales.

190. Nahum **Tate** was the poet laureate.

193-214. This passage on **Addison** was published twelve years before the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* was written.

230. **Bufo.** Probably Lord Halifax.

236. In ridicule of the antiquarians who frequently exhibited dismembered statues.

248. After a life of poverty, Dryden was accorded a splendid funeral through the munificence of several persons of quality.

256. John Gay's sweet temper endeared him to all his friends. The Duke and Duchess of Queensbury pensioned him most generously, and he died (1732) by no means a pauper.

280. See note to *An Essay on Man*, IV, v. 278.

299. Pope had been accused of ridiculing, in the *Essay on Taste*, the furniture and appointments of Canons, the seat of the Duke of Chandos, where he had been a guest. He denied the charge and was believed by the duke.

305. **Sporus.** Lord Hervey, though apparently harmless, was one of those for whom Pope conceived a violent antipathy. The succeeding lines show this feeling. Cf. v. 149 and v. 363.

343. **Stood.** For withstood.

350. Though it was publicly disproved, it was nevertheless repeated in libels that Pope received subscriptions to Shakespeare and set his name to Broome's verses.

351. Certain trash, such as profane psalms, court poems, and other scandalous verses, were printed in Pope's name by Curll and others.

353. A caricature of himself.

354-355. The Duke of Buckingham, Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Swift, Dr. Arbuthnot, Bishop Atterbury, Mr. Gay, his parents, and even his nurse were aspersed in papers printed by his enemies.

355. **Or live in exile.** Atterbury was in exile.

365. The so-called **knights of the post** stood about the sheriff's pillars, ready to swear anything for pay.

371. In 1733 Pope wrote a prologue for a play, to be presented for the benefit of his one-time enemy, Dennis, who was then old, blind, and in distress.

372. See note to **Tibbald**, v. 164.

373. See notes to **Cibber**, v. 60, and **Moore**, v. 23.

374. It was ten years after the scandals and libels against Pope were first published before he replied with the *Dunciad*.

375. **Welsted** had declared in print that Pope had occasioned a lady's death, and gave her the name of a person Pope had never heard of.

378. **Budgell** had abused him in print because he unjustly thought Pope had a hand in writing some criticisms that appeared in the *Grub Street Journal*.

391. **Bestia**, who here signifies the Duke of Marlborough, was a Roman proconsul who was bribed by Jugurtha into a dishonorable peace.

393. Dryden had married Lady Howard, Addison the Countess of Warwick, both of which ladies are said to have had very disagreeable tempers.

397. A nonjuror, he would not take the oath of allegiance or supremacy, or the oath against the Pope.

417. Dr. Arbuthnot had been the favorite physician of Queen Anne.

## ADDRESS TO THE GODDESS OF DULNESS

Title. These lines, taken from Book IV of *The Dunciad*, give the reader a fair idea of the character and trend of the whole work.

10. **Winton**. Winchester.

17. **The Samian Y**. Used by Pythagoras as emblematic of the different roads of Vice and Virtue.

19-28. Recalls the fact that Pope attended schools very little, but at the age of twelve outlined his own course of study, and in later years rejoiced that he had learned the sense and not the words of classic authors.



32. **Hall.** The House of Commons. Westminster Hall.

33. Sir William **Wyndham.** An eminent English statesman.

34. Lord Charles **Talbot** Pulteney, Earl of Bath, who deprived Sir Robert Walpole of his place.

40. Dr. South had declared an epigram to be as difficult as an epic poem, while the critics had declared the latter to be "the masterpiece of man."

42. James I delighted to teach his courtiers and favorites Latin, and Gondemar, the Spanish ambassador, often spoke false Latin in order to give the king the pleasure of correcting him and thus to secure the king's favor.

60. Pope, under the name of Bentley, accounted for the brackets around this line by declaring them spurious and an interpolation of an editor, since this college had sent its representatives to the court of Dulness as early as any other.

62. In 1703, at a meeting of the heads of the University of Oxford, Locke had been censured for his *Essay on Human Understanding*, and the reading of it forbidden.

64. **Crousaz.** A follower of Locke who put an abusive commentary on the *Essay on Man*. **Burgersdyck.** A follower of Aristotle.

65. The Cam River runs between these colleges, which are particularly known for their disputations.

67. **Bentley.** A Cambridge critic; a master of Trinity College.

72. **Walker.** Vice-Master of Trinity, a constant friend of Bentley; see note to v. 78.

76. **Aristarchus.** A famous commentator whose name has frequently been used to signify a complete critic.

78. **Bentley** had published an edition of Horace and *Paradise Lost*. The latter he had greatly injured by fancied improvements.

84. Bentley had boasted at his restoration of the *Æolic digamma*.

86. Whether at the end of the first ode of Horace the reading would be, *Me doctarum hederæ* or *Te doctarum hederæ*.

88. Whether **Cicero** be pronounced with *C* or *K* in Greek.

89. Dr. Robert **Friend**. Master of Westminster School.

90. Dr. Antony **Alsop**. An imitator of Horace.

92. **Manilius** or **Solinus**. Inferior Latin authors.

94. **Suidas**. A third-rate dictionary maker.

97. **Gellius**. A critic.

**Stobæus**. One of the "bookmakers" such as are described in Irving's *The Art of Bookmaking*.

103. **Kuster**, **Burman**, and **Wasse**. Contemporary German scholars and editors.

111-112. Isaac **Barrow**. Master of Trinity. Francis **Atterbury**. Dean of Christ Church. Both eloquent preachers.

136. An allusion to the saying of Aristotle that in every block of marble is a statue if only the superfluous parts be removed.

## THE TRIUMPH OF DULNESS

Title. These are the concluding lines of *The Dunciad*.

23. Pope here assumes the prophetic strain and foretells what we feel and what we are to fear. He refers, he says, to certain most adored authors in Divinity, Philosophy, Physics, Metaphysics, etc., who are too good to be named here.

## ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY

Title. This ode, written in 1708, at the request of Sir Richard Steele, was recast in 1730 into simpler form, in order that it might be set to music. The first four stanzas were considerably changed.

1. Cf. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*.

**Nine**. The nine Muses.

35. In 1730 the following lines were here added :—

“Amphion thus bade wild dissension cease,  
And softened mortals learned the arts of peace.  
Amphion taught contending kings  
From varying discords to create,  
The music of a well-tuned state;  
Nor slack nor strain the tender strings,  
Those useful touches to impart  
That strike the subject's answering heart,  
And the soft silent harmony that springs  
From sacred union and consent of things.”

At the same time vv. 51-55 were made to read:—

“Sad Orpheus sought his consort lost;  
The adamantine gates were barred,  
And nought was seen and nought was heard  
Around the dreary coast;”

38. The Argo, in which Jason sailed to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece.

39. Orpheus.

42. Apollonius conceives of Chiron coming down to the shore as the vessels passed his island and causing his wife to bring forward his little son Achilles, that the child might be seen by his father Peleus, who accompanied Jason.

50. **Phlegethon**. A river of fire in Tartarus.

51. In some of the old writers Orpheus is a philosopher, a legislator, and a mystic.

66. **Sisyphus** was doomed to roll a rock up a hill in Tartarus; but each time, when he had nearly reached the summit, it invariably fell back to the plain.

67. **Ixion** was bound to a wheel that revolved incessantly.

80. **Myrtle** was sacred to Venus, the goddess of love.

81. According to the myth, Orpheus visited Pluto's realm to reclaim his wife, Eurydice. Pluto, charmed by his music, prom-

ised that she might follow Orpheus to the upper world, but only on condition that he should not look back at her until they reached the upper air. In his impatience he did glance back, and Eurydice was instantly seized and carried away, forever lost to the musician.

85. **Proserpine.** The stolen daughter of Ceres and the wife of Pluto.

91. **Styx.** The river of hate, in Tartarus.

95. The Fates ; Atropos, Clotho, and Lachesis.

99. **Hebrus.** A river in Thrace.

106. The **Furies** avenged crimes.

111. Orpheus, having offended the women of Thrace by his neglect of them, was stoned to death during the Bacchanalian orgies, and his head and legs were thrown into the river Hebrus.

134. Cf. *Alexander's Feast* : —

“ He [Timotheus] raised a mortal to the skies,  
She [St. Cecilia] drew an angel down.”

## EPITAPH ON SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL

Title. Sir William Trumbull, a man of Oxford training, who had retired from public life to end his days on his estate near Windsor Forest, was attracted to Pope by finding they had a common taste for the classics. The old statesman and the deformed boy rode together often and had long discussions over poetry and letters. Sir William died in 1716.

## ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY

Title. This poem is supposed to have been written in 1712 and published in 1717. There were many rumors in regard to the heroine of this piece, which was supposed to be founded on fact. It has since been proved that the only basis in truth lay in Pope's

sympathy for an unhappy married woman whom he mentioned in a letter written in 1712.

### ELOISA TO ABELARD

Title. Abelard and Eloisa, two persons who flourished in the twelfth century, were distinguished for their unfortunate passions. After many calamities they each retired to a religious house and gave their lives to religion. Many years later a letter of Abelard's to a friend fell into the hands of Eloisa, reawakened her passion, and occasioned letters which give a lively picture of the struggles of grace with nature, and virtue with passion.

133. Abelard founded a monastery.

212. Pope confesses that this line is borrowed from Crashaw.

343. Abelard died in 1142, Eloisa in 1163. Their bodies are now interred in one tomb in the monastery of Paraclete, Paris, where a splendid monument commemorates their devotion.

360. In 1715 Pope met Lady Mary Wortley Montague, with whom he formed a friendship. Two years later, after she had left England, he sent her this poem in a letter suggesting the applicability of the concluding lines to his own suffering under the existing circumstances of his separation from her.

### MESSIAH

Written, according to Courthope, in 1712.

### ADVERTISEMENT

“In reading several passages of the prophet Isaiah, which foretell the coming of Christ, and the felicities attending it, I could not but observe a remarkable parity between many of the thoughts and those in the *Pollio* of Vergil. This will not seem surprising,

when we reflect that the Eclogue was taken from a Sibylline prophecy on the same subject. One may judge that Vergil did not copy it line by line, but selected such ideas as best agreed with the nature of Pastoral Poetry, and disposed them in that manner which served most to beautify his piece. I have endeavoured the same in this imitation of him, though without admitting any thing of my own ; since it was written with this particular view, that the reader, by comparing the several thoughts, might see how far the images and descriptions of the Prophet are superior to those of the Poet. But as I fear I have prejudiced them by my management, I shall subjoin the passages of Isaiah, and those of Vergil, under the same disadvantage of a literal translation.”

### ODE ON SOLITUDE

Pope himself is authority for the statement that this poem was written when he was but twelve years old. It is the earliest of his remaining poems, though his friends mention having seen others of earlier dates.

### THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

This ode was written at the request of Steele. In a letter to Steele on that occasion Pope says: “ You have it, as Cowley calls it, just warm from the brain ; it came to me the first moment I waked this morning ; yet you’ll see, it was not so absolutely inspiration, but that I had in my head not only the verses of Hadrian but the fine fragment of Sappho.”

### ON HIS GROTTA AT TWICKENHAM

Title. These lines were enclosed in a letter to Bolingbroke, September 3, 1740.

The grotto was composed of marbles, spars, gems, ores, and minerals ; and the improving and finishing of it is said to have been the delight of his declining years.

10. Lord Bolingbroke.

11. Sir William Wyndham, an excellent gentleman.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Title. This poem was written in 1738, to present to the public his belief, which had been variously misrepresented and misunderstood. Though Warburton had striven with great ingenuity to prove that Pope's declaration of "What ever is is right" was not fatalism, he had not fully succeeded, and Pope therefore undertook to explain himself in this prayer.

### WINDSOR FOREST

This poem, which was inscribed to the Right Honorable George Lord **Lansdown**, was written at two different times. The first two hundred and eighty-nine lines, which relate to the country, were composed in 1704 ; the remainder, with its celebration of the Peace of Utrecht, was added at the suggestion of Lord Lansdown. In this part Pope evidently aimed to do for the Peace of Utrecht what Addison had done for Marlborough's victory at Blenheim in 1704. Because of the character and date of the first part Pope ranked this among his *Juvenile* and *Pastoral Poems*. There was for many years a tradition that it was written under a certain beech tree, but the tree has since been destroyed.

5. George **Granville** (Lord Lansdown) held several distinguished offices under Queen Anne and in 1711 was made a peer ; but on the accession of George I was a suspected person and was confined in the Tower. He was a popular poet of his own day, a lover and

patron of literature, a patriot, and in all respects worthy of being a poet's friend.

45. Under the Norman kings laws were made by which the killing of a deer, a boar, or a hare was punished by putting out the delinquent's eye.

65. An allusion to the destruction made in the New Forest and the tyrannies exercised by William I.

80. When the body of William the Conqueror was about to be lowered into the grave, an armorer in the company forbade the interment on the ground that the piece of land had been seized by William from his (the armorer's) father and never paid for. Prince Henry was obliged to pay the fellow for the burial-place before the interment could take place.

81. Richard, William's second son, was said to have been gored to death by a stag in New Forest.

83. **Rufus** was accidentally slain in the New Forest by his favorite, Sir Walter Tyrrel. A stone now marks the spot where he fell.

160. **Diana**.

162. **Queen Anne**, who was fond of hunting.

207. The river **Loddon**.

211-216. Pope says that these lines were added after the first writing of the poem.

236. **Lord Lansdown**.

264. **Cooper's Hill**, near Egham and Runnymede, was the subject of a poem by Sir John Denham.

271. See note to v. 264.

272. **Abraham Cowley** (1618-1667), a poet, popular in his own day, died on the edge of this forest.

291. **Henry Howard**, Earl of **Surrey**, a writer of several sonnets, the scene of which was laid at Windsor, was beheaded by royal command in 1547.

297. **Geraldine**. The daughter of the Earl of Kildare, and the beloved of Surrey, v. 291.



298. **Mira** was the Countess of Newburgh, the lady to whom Granville sang.

303. **Edward III.**

305. David Bruce, king of Scotland, and John, king of France.  
**Cressi.** Crécy.

307. **Verrio.** A Neapolitan artist, a decorator of stairways, ceilings, etc.

311. **Henry VI.**

314. **Edward IV.**

316. **Bellerium.** Land's End; so named from Belerus, a Cornish giant.

319. **Charles I** lies buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

322-323. The plague and fire of London.

336. **Augusta.** A Roman name for London.

345. **Vandalis.** The Wandel.

347. The **Mole** sometimes entirely disappears.

355-368. These lines allude to the expected peace, for which conferences were opened in 1711, to the previous campaigns in Spain and Germany, to the war between Peter the Great and Charles II, and to the early difficulties in the East Indian settlements.

359. Homer calls the Nile "a river that falls from Jupiter or heaven." Its sources were long unknown.

377. Fifty new churches had recently been erected in London.

387. St. George's cross.

398. A wish that London might be a free port.



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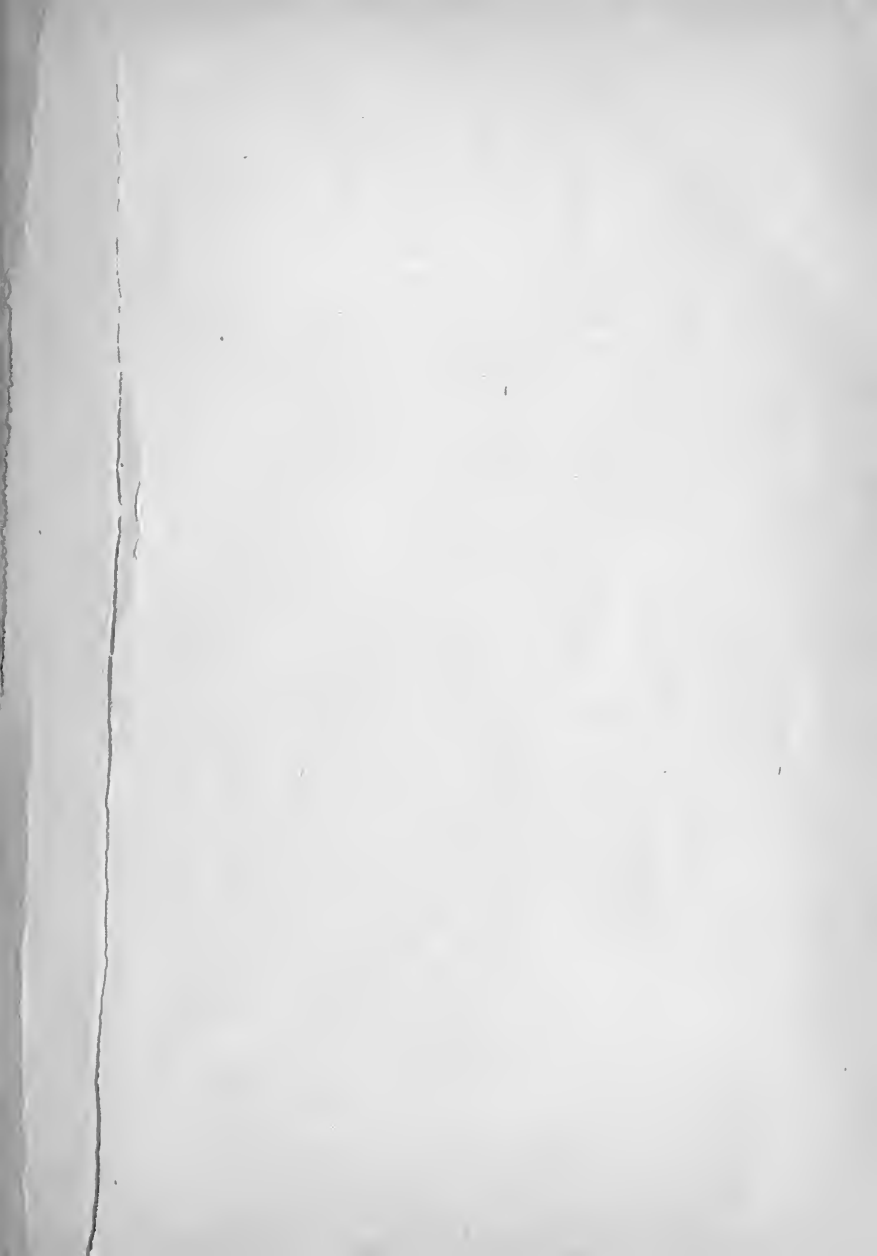
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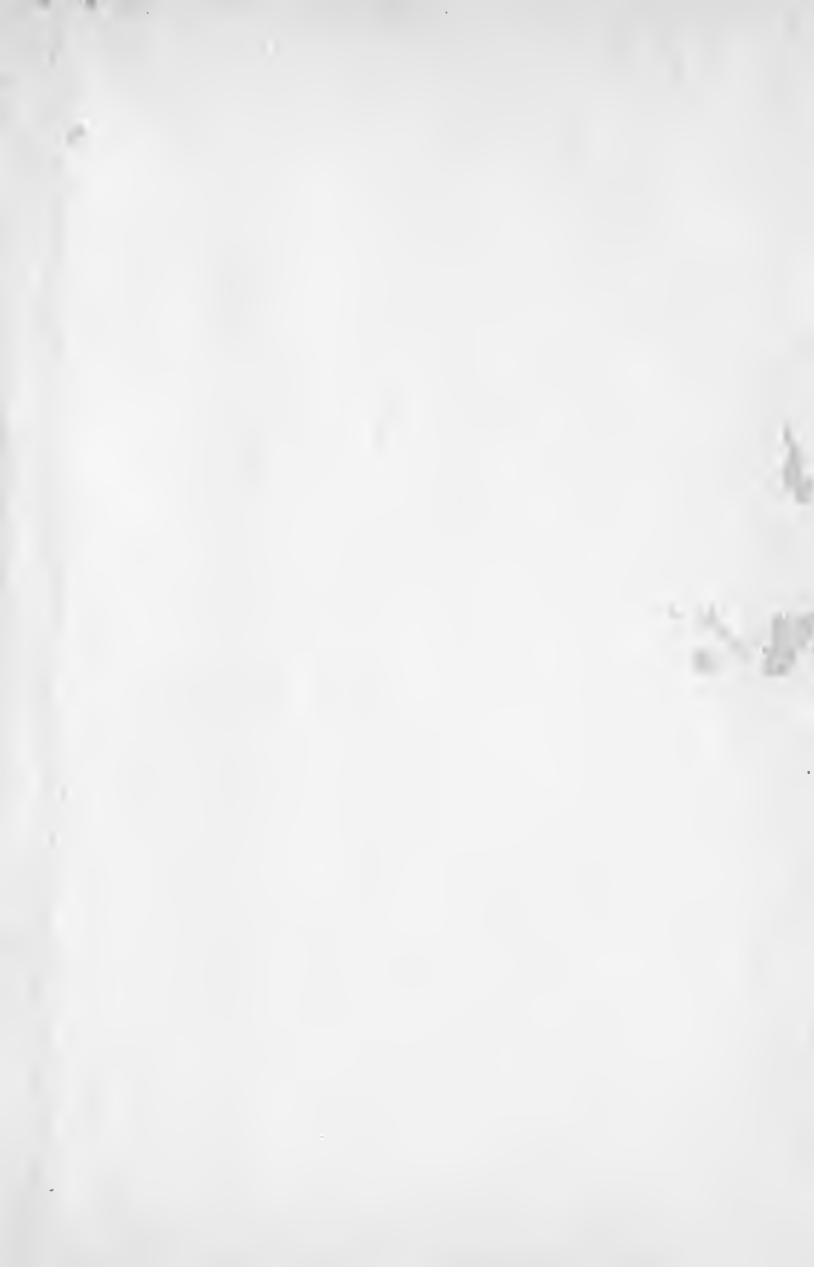
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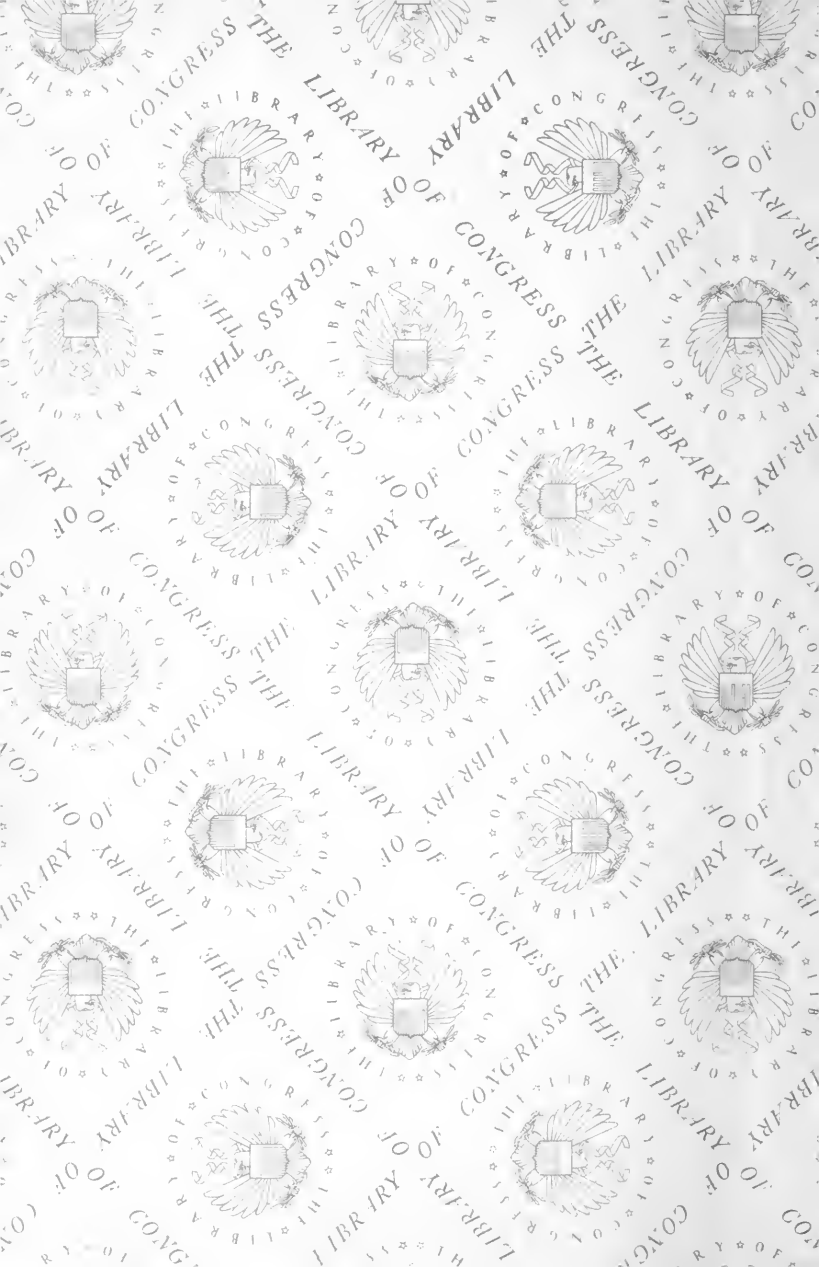






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